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QUEBEC AND NEW YORK.

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Printed by J. Darling & Son, Leadenhall Street, London.

QUEBEC AND NEW YORK;

OR,

THE THREE BEAUTIES.

AN

HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF 1775.

Joseph H. Ingraham, 1809-1866.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE PIRATE OF THE GULF, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

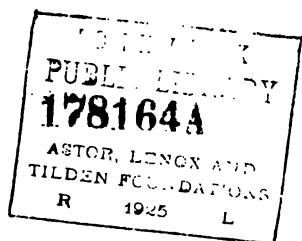
LONDON:

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

1839.

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QUEBEC AND NEW YORK.

CHAP. I.

The Monk.

THE bells of a ruined monastery in the vale of Chaudiere were chiming the hour of evening service at the close of a cold windy day in the month of November, seventeen hundred and seventy-five, when a single traveller, in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest, appeared on the skirts of a forest, that, sacred from the invading ploughshare, or the axe of the woodman, stretched many leagues into the province of Maine. His steps were slow and heavy, as if he had travelled many a weary mile of the vast wilderness behind him; and when the north wind

howled at intervals through the wood, he drew his garment still closer about his person, and bore himself with a sturdier step; but, nevertheless, his slight frame and vacillating limbs did not promise to withstand for a much longer space such rude assaults.

Although faint with fasting, and toilworn with long travel, yet the sound of the convent bell, as it swept past him on the wind, infused additional vigour into his limbs; and roused to renewed exertions, with an exclamation of joy, he hastened forward to a slight eminence which rose in his path: from its summit he beheld a prospect that fully rewarded him for all the hardships he had endured in his lonely pilgrimage through the wilderness. Beneath him lay a secluded and pleasant valley, about a league in breadth, guarded from the wintry winds that swept the highlands, by a chain of hills, wooded to their tops with forest trees, the lingering foliage of which was dyed with every hue of the rainbow. Through its bosom the Chaudiere flowed, in a thousand romantic windings, towards a scarcely-visible opening in the range of hills

to the north, through which to pour its tributary waters into the St. Lawrence.

Leaning on his staff, his eyes expressive of that delight experienced by the true admirer of Nature when contemplating her lovelier features, he lingered a moment to trace the graceful meanderings of the river, now wheeling peacefully around the base of the hill on which he stood, its glassy breast unruffled by the slightest zephyr, now gurgling and rippling among protruding rocks, and now rushing with velocity to the brink of a precipice, then, with a roar that rose distinctly to his ears, plunging into a foaming basin, from which ascended a cloud of snowy vapour, catching from the beams of the setting sun, as it sailed above the valley, a thousand brilliant and varied hues. Again his eye would follow it, gliding with the stillness of a lake into the depths of a forest, in the recesses of which it was lost to the sight, until it reappeared in a glen full half a league beyond, through which it rushed in a hundred cascades, brilliantly white with foam and dancing spray; then, separating

in a broader part of the valley, it formed numerous verdant islands, rich in summer with the greenest verdure, and clothed with woods so ornamentally disposed in clumps and groves by the hand of Nature, that art would have diminished rather than added to their picturesque beauty. On one of these islands, either of which the father of poetry might have chosen for the abode of Calypso, the traveller discovered the convent, whose vesper bell, the harbinger of civilization to his ears, had infused new vigour into his frame. Besides this edifice, a few peasants' cottages, sprinkled here and there through the valley, and surrounded by small enclosures of cultivated ground, the harvests long since gathered, were the only indications to him of the presence of fellow-beings.

After gazing, until twilight rendered distant objects dim and uncertain, upon the scene so unexpectedly presented to his eyes, long familiar only with the gloomy grandeur of pathless forests, occasionally relieved by the hut of their savage denizen, the traveller gathered the folds of his robe beneath his belt, and grasped his staff

resolutely; then for a moment fixing his eyes upon the towers of the island convent, as the last chime of the bells ceased to echo among the hills, he said, as he prepared to descend a rude path, if the scarcely-visible track left by the hunter or beasts of prey may thus be denominated—
“ There shall I find what I most need, a night’s repose, and, if all tales be true, good and substantial cheer withal; for the reverend fathers, while they have cure of the souls of their flocks, are not wont to neglect their own bodily comforts.”

Thus speaking, he set forward with an active step, and following the precipitous path down the face of the hill, after a perilous and rapid descent, gained the river at a point where it was confined in a deep channel by rugged cliffs. Entering a sheep-track on the verge of the tumultuous stream, he walked vigorously on, at one time descending precipices, at another crossing intervals strewn with autumnal leaves, with the river, broken from its confinement, gliding noiselessly by within reach of his staff. At length he entered the wood in which the stream had

become lost to his eye from the brow of the hill; and as the twilight was fast thickening into night, he quickened his pace, and traversed its gloomy labyrinths at a rate his former apparent fatigue did not by any means promise. As he emerged into the open valley, through which the river flowed, studded with islands, the tower of the convent was visible half a mile distant, with a light faintly glimmering in one of its windows. The path was now more trodden, and the signs of careful husbandry were visible around him. Passing through a narrow lane, bounded by evergreen hedges, a few minutes' walk conducted him to a peasant's cot, situated on the banks of the river, and nearly opposite the monastery. He paused a moment in the shadow of a tree, which cast its branches over the roof, and surveyed the humble dwelling.

It was one story high, constructed of wood, neatly whitewashed, and, like most Canadian houses of the class, with a single chimney rising in the centre. A garden adjoined it, and although not arranged with horticultural precision, it appeared to have abounded, during the proper

season, with every variety of fruit and culinary vegetable peculiar to the climate; while here and there a small cluster of flowers, and the further display of floral taste in the ornamental appendages of one or two vases placed on an humble portico before the door, betrayed the presence of a passion usually found alone in higher walks of life, but which is a natural attribute of the light-hearted and romantic peasantry of the Canadian valleys. A bright fire blazed in the huge stone chimney, shedding its cheerful light throughout the apartment, and flashing at intervals through the window upon the person of the traveller. A young and very handsome female was arranging a small round table in the centre of the room for the evening meal, while three or four ruddy-cheeked boys, with one little girl, were watching, with very decided infantile epicureanism, the tedious process of the baking of half a score of brown cakes on a griddle. The table, with its snowy cloth, the shining dresser, the well-scoured white floor, and a certain tidy air reigning over the whole interior of the cottage, combined with

the picturesque *mantelet* and gay head dress, *à la Française*, of the female, with the group of children, decreasing, from the eldest progressively downward, half a head in height, showed, altogether, the happy mother, the conscious beauty, and the frugal housewife.

The traveller sighed as he gazed on this humble scene of domestic happiness.—“ Here, at least, is the abode of peace and contentment, if such there be on earth,” he said, half aloud ; “ the voice of criminal ambition never reaches this happy threshold. Alike ignorant of the vices and pleasures of the world, the highest aim of its inmates is faithfully to fulfil their duty to God and their neighbour. Their errors are those of thought rather than of action ; never tempted, they are guiltless : with light hearts and clear consciences, they enjoy the present with thankfulness, and look to the future without dread. Why is my destiny so opposite ? Why am I tortured with ambitious aspirations, and mocked, sleeping and waking, with visions of power and empire, which, when I would grasp them, elude me ? Delusive temptations,

pointing me to the temple's pinnacle that my fall may be far and sure! But stand or fall I must fulfil my destiny, and obey that restless spirit within which bids me onward. But, alas! high as I may climb, the time may come when, perchance, I shall sigh to exchange lots with the veriest hind that ever whistled behind a plough."

His half-spoken thoughts were interrupted by a footstep approaching from behind, and a manly voice at the same time saluting him respectfully in the Canadian patois.—"Good even, father, thou art somewhat late to cross the water to-night. St. Claude locks fast at vespers, and no key but a golden one, which seldom hangs at a priest's girdle, can turn back her rusty bolt till the third cock-crowing."

The monk started slightly at the unexpected presence and address of the speaker, and then courteously replied to his salutation, at the same time fixing his eyes upon him with a keen and searching glance, as if he would read the inner man by his outward seeming.

This second individual, who was now visible by the light which shone brightly through the cottage window full upon his person, was tall and finely moulded, and clothed in the ordinary dress of the Canadian peasant. This consisted of a grey *capote*, or loose surtout, reaching to the knee, confined at the waist by a gay sash of mingled green and scarlet colours, and closely buttoned to the throat, exposing to advantage the breadth and massive proportions of his chest. His head was surmounted by the *bonnet bleu*, which he wore with a jaunting air, and moccasins of undressed moose-hide covered his feet. A short French fowlingpiece that he carried carelessly in one hand, a string of wild game held in the other, and a large brown dog of the Newfoundland breed which followed at his heels, completed the sum of his attendants, equipments, and costume.

“The holy fathers are at their supper now,” continued the peasant, “and old Homfroy careth little to leave his snug chimney side to open gates after the stars begin to twinkle. Jaquette, I see, by the bright blaze on the

hearth, has spread the table, so enter, good father, and bless my roof and grace my board, though it will ill compare with that of thy refectory. Nevertheless, it shall ne'er be said *habitan* Francois Benoit let vicaire or novice pass his door, or sail his ferry, without first blessing and breaking bread at his board. Thou art weary, father; but a comfortable chair, one of these ducks well broiled, and a cup of Jaquette's wine, of her own vintage, to moisten it, will cheer thee up, and make thee lean less heavily on thy staff."

"Thank you, thank you, friend—I would say, my son," replied the monk, who still retained his original position beneath the tree; "but time presses, and I must cross the water before I sleep. I will, nevertheless, accept your pious offer, and taste your good cheer, for I have travelled far; and afterward, with what speed you may, ferry me over to yonder island, if, as I conjecture from its position, it is where the learned Father Etienne exercises spiritual control."

"Then, father," said the peasant, observing

him more closely, "thou art not of the brotherhood of St. Claude o' the Island? And now thou hast not thy face so muffled in thy cowl, I see thou art a stranger, for each one of the priest's faces, and they are few and old, is as well known to me, saving their reverences, as my own, seeing that I have pulled an oar face to face with them all, since Jaquette and I were married, which will be five years come Michaelmas. But if thou visitest the monastery, and knowest Father Etienne, he will give thee a good welcome, either with Gascon wines or clerkly Latin, venison steaks or homilies, as will best chime with thy humour and his own."

As he finished speaking he advanced to the door of his dwelling, followed by the monk. They were met on the threshold by the young wife, who, hearing the voice of her husband outside, opened it for the purpose of flying into his arms, for the attitude in which she was arrested by the sight of the stranger as she was crossing the threshold, and the conscious blush which increased her beauty, sufficiently betrayed this to have been the wifely mode in

which she intended to welcome him home after a whole day's absence on the hills.

"Sacré sainte Marie, Jaquette!" exclaimed the husband, good humouredly, "be thy wits fled, because a holy priest deigns to bless us with his presence?—Give me a kiss! No? Nay, then, if thou'rt so coy, wife, before a holy monk, because, forsooth, he carries youth in his eye, he shall give thee the kiss of sisterhood, which is his right to bestow."

"The father, but not thee, Francois, in such a presence," said the blushing dame; and as she spoke, she presented, with great simplicity and reverence, her mantling cheek to the salutation of the youthful priest, who, apparently surprised, but not disconcerted, gracefully passed his arm half round her waist, and gently drawing her towards him, pressed, instead, her lips with his own, and with rather more warmth than beseemed his cloth and the self-denying vows of his order, enjoining upon it members to flee *oscula mulierum*.

"Beshrew me, father," said the husband, "there was much unction in that reverend sa-

lutation. I would swear, saving your reverence's presence, thou wert a Benedictine, and hadst a wife of thine own to practise on; for, verily, thou knowest the kiss of sisterhood with such familiar grace, as is not learned in St. Claude's convent walls at least."

The monk smiled, and accepted a chair which his host, while speaking, had placed for him at the table, already covered with the smoking viands constituting the usual evening meal. Francois, Jaquette, and the little epicures before mentioned, having also taken their accustomed places, and the dog seated himself on his haunches by the chair of the youngest with a wistful look, one of the children, impatient and hungry, thrust his little fist into the plate of cakes, when his mother cried out, reprovingly—"Fie, fie, Martin!—where are the child's manners and religion? Dost know the holy father has not yet said grace?—wouldst eat food unblessed, like a wild Indian, child?"

At this hint the child drew back abashed, casting his eyes obliquely up into the face of the holy man, whose presence had placed such

an ill-timed injunction upon his appetite. The priest himself appeared suddenly embarrassed; but after a moment's pause, and at the request of Francois that he would say a grace over their food, he dropped his face within his cowl, and muttered something scarcely audible; then patting little Martin on his curly head, he said, cheerfully—"Now, eat away, my little man; your food is as holy as words of grace can make it."

The head and face of the monk, as he sat at the frugal board of the peasant, with his cowl thrown back, was for the first time plainly visible. His forehead was high, and cast in an intellectual mould; the upper portion expressed dignity and firmness, while the full arched brow indicated a man who thought much and intensely; it was the forehead of a scholar. His eyes were black and piercing; when animated, they were full of dark fire, but when in repose, they were softer than the soft eye of woman. His nose would have been Grecian but for a slight irregularity, perceptible only in profile; the nostrils were firm, thin, and remarkable for

dilating with every emotion. His mouth, when relieved by a smile, wore an expression of great sweetness; but then a voluptuous repose dwelt upon his under lip, nearly approaching to sensuality: from the flexibility of his lips, chiselled with the accuracy of sculpture, and their habitual contradictory expression, the upper being short, thin, and curling with sarcasm, or pressed close to the other with determination, the under, round, full, beautifully formed, and glowing with the passion of the voluptuary, his mouth possessed the power of expressing, in the superlative degree, every passion with which he was agitated; it was beautiful or deformed, as love or hate, scorn or pity, ruled there in their turns; it might have been the fairest feature in the face of an angel, or the most fearful in that of a demon. His chin, so far as it was visible, was full, square, and massive, without being heavy; and the *contour* of his face was slightly angular rather than oval, to which form it inclined. His hair was dark and abundant; his complexion a pale olive, but somewhat browned by recent and unwonted exposure. His person, so

far as it could be seen by the habit he wore, was slightly but elegantly formed, and rather below than above the common height. Although redeemed from effeminacy by the firm mouth and chin, the manly and strongly-intellectual forehead, and the unsubdued fire of his flashing eyes, his whole appearance was so youthful, that he did not seem to be more than eighteen years of age, though closer observation would have made him perhaps two or three years older. His address was easy, his language pure and elegant, and his bearing affable and courtly.

The honest peasant having terminated his observations on the appearance and manners of his guest, as from time to time he raised his eyes to survey him during the meal, was so struck with his extreme youth (which, united with the beauty of his features and his fine eyes, also made an impression upon the fair Jaquette deeper than she would have been willing Francois should have known), that he at length felt some curiosity to learn the nature of the business that called so young a priest into that remote valley, and especially to the quiet monas-

tery of St. Claude ; but Francois was born a degree north of New England, and suppressed an inquiry having no better object in view than simply the gratification of his curiosity. Wishing to hold nevertheless some conversation with his guest, he laid his spoon beside his thrice-emptied dish, and reverently, yet with the frank and ingenuous air, as remote from servility as from forwardness, characteristic of the Canadian peasant, said—" Thou hast eaten full fairly, father ; my homely entertainment is but an ill match for an appetite sharpened on the hills by a north wind, as I wot thine has been."

" How know you I am from the hills ?" inquired the monk, eyeing him fixedly.

" I saw thee coming down the southern ridge a full half hour ere I met thee : I took thee for an Indian hunter, till thy long robe, blowing out, showed thee to be a monk. But empty thy cup, father. Jaquette, fill his reverence's cup. Nay, 'tis but a mild wine, father, made from the pippin, which we in the valley call the Chaudiere grape ; never better was made in *la belle France*. I have drunk muscat, burgundy,

and tent, with old Homfroy the porter, a part of the perquisites, as he called it, from his reverence's table on holidays, and I would not give one round cup of Jaquette's pippin wine for a gross of such as the good fathers drink; St. Peter forgive me if I blaspheme in saying so!"

"The pretty Jaquette's wine is doubtless excellent, worthy Francois; but wine suits neither my constitution nor my habits, which are temperate. Accept my thanks for your hospitality, and, if you will, this piece of gold, and then take boat with me, for it is already late, and I have far to travel on the morrow."

"Nay, father," replied the peasant, putting aside the hand of his guest, "Francois Benoit never took money from priest for food or ferriage; freely thou hast had meat and drink. Leave then thy blessing on my roof, and I will place thee on the island in the flap of a heron's wing."

"If then, worthy Francois, I may not requite your hospitality," said the monk, as the peasant took his oars from the becket in which they were used to hang along the ceiling, "my little

friend Martin, in consideration of a certain disappointment caused by my presence at table, shall take the coin in token of peace between us."

As he spoke, he placed the piece of gold in the hands of Martin, bade Jaquette a smiling good night (without repeating the sisterly salutation with which he had first met her), and followed Francois, who with difficulty prevented his shaggy Newfoundland companion from attending him towards the beach.

The night was clear and piercingly cold; the stars sparkled like diamonds through the frosty atmosphere, and the earth crackled beneath their feet as they crossed the sward, on which the dew became hoar as fast as it fell. The river glided past with noiseless velocity, reflecting the stars in its black transparent bosom with wonderful precision. The skiff, already afloat, was unmoored by Francois, who sprung into it, followed by the monk, and pushed it into the current, the movement producing a slight decrepitating noise, as if the surface of the river

was already glazed with a thin stratum of ice, yet so transparent as to be invisible.

“ There will be a bridge of ice thrown across the ferry to-night, father,” said Francois, bending, as he spoke, to his slender oar. “ If the edge of this sharp frost don’t get blunted before morning, a pair of skates, with a proper groove, and deep in the iron, will be better for crossing from island to main, than the best wherry, or for that matter, king’s war-ship, that ever sailed the salt sea. Hola! the ice crackles under the bows as if we were cutting through a pane of glass, and the air is as prickly as if it hailed needles. Thou wilt find father Etienne’s little closet, where he studies and prays, with its two stoves, a blessed change from this biting air. Methinks thou’rt clothed thinly; a good bear’s hide were worth twice thy robe of broadcloth. Dost not feel the cold, father?” inquired the talkative Francois of the silent monk, who sat in the stern of the boat, wrapped to the eyes in his cowl and gown, and apparently buried in profound thought.

“ No, my good friend—that is to say, my

worthy son," he answered: "the night air is indeed piercing, and my cloth garments but slight protection; but I am accustomed to exposure, although I may not boast your Herculean frame; neither have I been nursed, like yourself, in the lap of a Canadian winter. The cold increases indeed! A few more strokes of the oar, Francois, and we shall reach the island."

They were now rapidly approaching a light in one of the windows of the tower, and the walls of the monastery, relieved against the sky, became distinctly visible. Shooting into the dark shadow of a huge tree overhanging the water, they had nearly gained the beach, when a second light appeared in a distant part of the convent, and, at the same time, a single stroke of a bell rung with a dull and startling sound from the tower.

"Do you see that light? What means it, Francois?" asked the monk, quickly.

Francois, who looked one way while he pulled another, rested on his sculls, and, turning his head, looked steadily for an instant in the direction of the convent, and then resuming his oars,

replied—"That light is in father Etienne's private chamber, and the bell is a signal for the brotherhood to retire to their cells. 'Twill be a hard matter to get admittance to-night, father. After that light appears in the window, not a cat moves about the convent till morning; it burns there all night. His reverence is a great student, and it hath been rumoured his head will yet fill a cardinal's red cap. Well, it's a great thing to be a clerkly scholar, to talk Latin and Greek like one's mother tongue; and more blessed to be a holy monk; and better still to be a cardinal. But then, my old mother—Heaven and St. Peter send her soul safe out o' the pains o' purgatory!—used to tell me, that all these had their troubles, and greater the man greater the sinner. So I am content to remain simple Francois Benoit, husband of Jaquetté, and father of four rosy boys and girls, and ferryman to St. Claude. The Virgin be thanked for all blessings!"

Francois devoutly crossed himself as he concluded; and the boat at the same time grating upon the beach, he sprang out and secured it,

saying—"Here we are, father; I will see thee safe under old Homfroy's charge, and then hasten back to Jaquette and the little ones, for the ice will soon get too stiff for my wherry to cut through."

They had landed on a gentle slope beneath a large oak, which far overhung the water, and as the monk discovered, directly in front of the principal entrance to the convent. From the imperfect survey of the edifice he was enabled to take, as he followed the rapid strides of the athletic waterman to a wicket constructed in a large double door, or, more properly, gate of the main building, he saw that it was a long quadrangular structure of brick, much dilapidated, with the ornamental superaddition of an octagonal tower, surmounted by a cross, rising from the roof at each extremity, both, however, now falling into ruin. The pile was situated in the midst of a lawn, surmounted by a natural park of majestic forest trees, and on the broadest part of the island, which was, nevertheless, at this point so contracted, that there remained only a narrow esplanade between it and the river. It

was remarkably destitute of any, even the commonest architectural ornaments, with which the gentry and better classes in the province were accustomed at that period to decorate the exterior of their dwellings. Altogether, it struck the monk as gloomy and severe in its aspect, and not unsuited to be the abode of men, whose supposed austere and ascetic habits were in keeping with an exterior so forbidding.

His observations were at length interrupted by the voice of Francois in altercation with the porter of the convent for admission, while his knuckles, which he made use of to enforce his appeal, rung in the elastic atmosphere, as he struck against the door, like oak ringing upon oak.

“ Hoh, Homfroy! Wilt thou not answer? Open, open! Wouldst thou have a holy father stand the outer side o’ thy gate, in an air that would turn each hair of thy grey beard into an icicle? Open, I say, thou surly old dog, or, by the head of St. Peter, I will break down thy wicket with my oars, and then crack thy sulky pate! It’s a priest, I say—a reverend and holy

monk, who craves admittance. If he don't keep thee back in purgatory a twelvemonth for every minute thou keepest him without, then never trust me. Wilt not unbolt, old greybeard? Open, I say!"

"Chut st, chut st! good Francois! Have I said I will not open?" cried the old man at length, in a cracked and deprecating, yet sufficiently ill-humoured voice. "I did but stay to don my fur bonnet, and wrap my quilted gown about my old limbs. The rheumatics are very bad on me o' nights now. *Misericorde!* I can catch my death through a keyhole, and it's a broad door thou wouldst have me open. Thou art over hasty, lad, thou art over hasty."

While speaking, he was slowly and reluctantly undoing the fastenings on the inner side, and as he concluded, he turned the lock; then shielding his shrinking but well-wrapped person behind the half-opened door, he said hastily—"Enter, father, enter speedily! Go thy ways, Francois," he added, attempting to close the gate as the peasant was following the monk, "I will not move bar nor bolt to let thee out. Then enter if thou wilt; but this night at least,

thou shalt not sleep in thine own couch ! *Misericorde !*" he groaned, while he busied himself in securing the door with its heavy chains and bolts, " this doing and undoing of bolts and bars, these changes from a warm snug room to the cold air of these wintry nights, and this handling of cold iron, which sticks to my fingers and takes the skin off with it—*mon Dieu !* 'twill be the death of me. I'll to father Etienne this night—yet the passages are somewhat chilly, and it waxes late—but of a surety will I to-morrow, and resign the keys of mine office. If I don't resign while I have the power, grim death will soon deprive me of it."

Thus muttering and croaking, the old porter, himself not less grim than the personage to whom he applied this epithet, hobbled back into his domicilium. This was a little room beside the door, where blazed a cheerful fire, before which, on a few coals drawn to the hearth, a posset-dish was set filled with a liquid preparation, which, judging from the pleasant odour diffused throughout the apartment, was duly sea-

soned with spices. A comfortable, well-stuffed armchair stood near it, as if the supervisor of the tempting compound had just deserted it.

The monk and his attendant approached the fire, the warmth of which both required: their bodies were chilled, and their limbs and features partially benumbed by the intensity of the cold. The old porter resumed his chair, and had become absorbed in the posset-dish and its savoury contents, when the former, having expelled the cold from his limbs, requested him to inform the father Etienne, that a stranger from a distant convent desired to see him on private business of moment.

“Francois,” said old Homfroy, without looking up, “that huge carcass of thine is now well-nigh warmed through. Take then this lamp, and go thou and deliver the father’s message; and, peradventure, thou mayest sleep beneath thine own roof to-night.”

Francois took up the lamp with a laugh, and left the apartment. After the lapse of several minutes he returned, saying, that the father Etienne desired the stranger should be conduct-

ed to his closet. The monk, who had been traversing the porter's lodge with impatient strides during his absence, now followed him with alacrity. He led the way through a long passage paved with rough stones, at the extremity of which, they ascended a narrow staircase to a gallery above, lined with chambers or cells, many of them without doors, and all apparently deserted. This gallery terminated in a narrow door, giving admission into the southern tower of the monastery.

"There is the closet, father, where thou wilt find him thou hast travelled so far to see," said Francois, in a suppressed voice; "knock, and thou wilt find ready admittance. I will down and try my wits against old Homfroy's sullenness for a free passage forth; so I bid thee good-night, father, and crave thy blessing." As he spoke, he removed his bonnet, and bent on one knee reverentially before the priest.

"Good night, Francois, and take my blessing, such as it is," said the monk, laying his hand lightly on the head of the suppliant; then abruptly leaving him, he advanced to the ex-

tremity of the gallery and knocked softly at the door.

"Enter, my son," answered a deep voice within.

The monk lifted the latch, and entering, closed the door.

Francois, after seeing the monk disappear within, hastily descended the stairs and returned to the porter, whom, after a little parleying, he prevailed on to undo, for the second time that night,, the bolts and bars, whose every removal he asseverated, was an additional nail in his coffin.

"Have thee good night, honest Homfroy ; Jaquette shall send thee apples for thy next posset," said the light-hearted peasant, as he issued from the portal into the cutting night air.

Homfroy did not hear the latter part of Francois's speech, having, in his terror of the rheumatics, closed the door upon him before he had well got over the threshold.

"Have thee good night, is it?" he growled ;
"may the night freeze thee (as it's like to me), if thou bringest priest or layman more to dis-

turb me after vesper-chime. If I get not the rheumatic twinge in my left shoulder ere the sun rise, then I may shake my keys at him with the scythe and hour glass. This stranger, too," he continued, placing the keys in his girdle, " may take it into his head to choose the frosty sky to ramble abroad in instead of a warm Christian bed. The saints give him the mind to stay within till morning ! By St. Homfroy ! and that's my patron saint, I'll start bolt nor bar more to-night, if the holy pope himself and all the cardinals were out crying to get in, or in crying to get out—the Virgin defend me, that I should say so !" he ejaculated, in an under tone, devoutly making the sign of the cross with his keys upon his breast, over which his long white beard flowed in venerable profusion. Then re-entering his room, he shut the door, and once more applied himself to his posset, which was now poured out into a brown mug, and standing on a little table drawn before the fire, ready for that leisurely discussion that such grateful potations at all times demand.

CHAP. II.

The Chevalier.

THE closet into which the monk was admitted was of small dimensions, and octangular like the tower. Its bare walls exposed the rough surface of the material composing them, but little improved by the mason's trowel, or the scale of the architect. By day it received light from a single window, placed at so great a height from the floor as to preclude the necessity of a curtain, in which luxury it was deficient. It was now lighted by a single lamp, suspended by an iron chain from the ceiling to a level with the window, through which it nightly shed its cheerful beams across the water, a beacon to the belated traveller or lingering fisherman.

Beneath the lamp stood an oak table, groan-

ing under the weight of folios, quartos, and bulky manuscripts, a small place only being reserved on one side, within the comfortable influence of a stove, for the convenience of writing. The customary apparatus for this pursuit was displayed in the shape of a huge leaden standish, supported on lion's claws, and perforated with several deep apertures for pens, an antique black box, of curious workmanship, containing wafers, and a massive bronze urn, its lid punctured with innumerable holes, containing sparkling black sand, while letter-paper, half-written epistles, stamps, seals, and other appurtenances of a well-furnished escritorio, lay scattered upon the table in very scholastic confusion. Besides the table and lamp, a second stove placed opposite the first, two or three substantial-looking chairs, such as are found at the present day in Canadian cottages, and a narrow cott or berth in one angle of the room, completed the domestic garniture of the apartment. Its professional features were comprised in a brazen pillar, standing at the head of the cott, and supporting

a small silver crucifix, a marble basin, containing holy water, placed at the foot of the pillar, and a few pictures of saints in the agonies of martyrdom. A handsome well-filled bookcase, of dark-coloured wood, curiously latticed in front, of ancient and elaborate workmanship, standing on carved leopard's claws, was also placed at one side of the window, and within reach of the occupant's arm, when seated at the table. The room had an air of religious and literary seclusion that captivated the monk, as, after closing the door carefully behind him on his entrance, he paused, without removing his cowl, to survey for a moment both the apartment and its inmate.

When Francois entered to inform him that a stranger had arrived in the convent who sought a private interview with him, the inmate of this little chamber was seated at the table with a tract before him, entitled *De Servo Arbitrio*, his mind deeply absorbed in the disputation between that archpolemist Martin Luther and the learned Erasmus. On the departure of the peasant with orders to conduct the visiter to his closet, he closed the treatise, but still retained it in his

hand, with his fore finger placed habitually between the leaves, to indicate that paragraph of the controversy where he had been interrupted; and leaning his forehead upon his hand, as if mentally pursuing the broken train of argument, in this position he awaited the appearance of his visiter. When the monk entered he rose from his chair, and advanced a step to meet him, presenting to his gaze a tall and commanding person, a little inclined to corpulency, with a noble and finely-shaped head, and a clear blue eye, stern in its expression, and of that angular shape often found in men of unusual decision of character. His hair was light brown, somewhat touched by time, and arranged after the fashion of the *vicaires* or curés of the day, and being worn away about the temples, gave additional height to a forehead naturally lofty. His brows were square and fleshy, and only redeemed from intellectual heaviness by the lustre of the clear eye that played beneath. His mouth would have been handsome but for an habitual firm compression of the lips, more in unison with the character of a soldier than that of a scholar or

priest. Instead of the monastic habit, he wore a sort of clerical undress, consisting of a dark-coloured woollen wrapper, well lined and wadded, descending to the feet, and buttoned closely from the waist to the throat, after the fashion of the *capote* of the country.

"Benedicite, brother!" he said, advancing with a noble dignity of manner, and addressing the monk, after they had surveyed each other for a moment in silence; "I give thee welcome to my rough abode. But methinks thou art thinly clad to encounter such a night as this. Remove thy cowl, if so it please thee, and share the genial warmth of my hearth: afterward, I will learn of thee, and thou canst then tell me more at ease, the purpose of this visit."

The monk bowed courteously in reply, and approaching the stove, began to unloose the strings of his cowl and gown, which he seemed to find some difficulty in doing, while the priest continued—"Thou art, if my guess misleads me not—for thy garment bespeaks thee such, brother—a *professé* of the community *de Hôpital-général de Québec*; and, I doubt not, the long-expected

bearer of letters from the reverend vicar-general, touching the religious and political condition of our church under the existing provincial government?"

The monk, having at length succeeded in disengaging the fastenings of his cowl and gown, without replying, now hastily cast them aside, and stood before the astonished father no longer the hooded and shuffling monk, but an elegant and graceful youth, in a blue military surtout, with a short sword by his side, attached to a buff belt, in which was stuck a pair of serviceable pistols.—“ Reverend father, I am neither monk nor priest, but a soldier of the patriot army, which, doubtless, you have learned, ere now, is preparing to invade the Canadas,” said the young stranger, in a firm manly tone. “ In proof of my words, and in token of my good faith,” he added, fixing his eyes, with a look of intelligence, on those of the priest, “ I will repeat the talisman that shall beget mutual confidence between us. I have the honour, then, of addressing, not simply the monk Etienne, but the chevalier De Levi.”

“Thou hast the true credentials, young sir,” said the priest, assuming the air and manners of a soldier and man of the world; “in me you see that unfortunate chief who was once the leader of a gallant army, and conqueror of those proud islanders who now hold these fair lands. In this peaceful garb,” he continued, with emotion, “you behold the last general who drew blade for the Canadas. Driven by a superior force from before the walls of Quebec, which I had closely besieged, I left that citadel in the hands of the enemy, and in despair of ever retrieving our national misfortunes, buried my disgrace in the seclusion of a religious life. But,” he added, with increasing energy, pacing the apartment, “the servile oath of allegiance to the British king I have never taken, nor do my religious vows interfere with my patriotism. I have ever been ready, when the time should arrive (and, please God, that time is now at hand), to aid in the removal of the invading Britons; and, if need be, by the mass! I can still wield the sword, as I have done before, in the same good cause.”

While the chevalier De Levi spoke, his eyes flashed with a newly-awakened military spirit, and his voice rung sharp and stern. But the momentary enthusiasm passed away as quickly as it came; and with a subdued manner, and in a tone more in keeping with his habit and present profession, he said—"May it please thee to be seated, fair sir, for I would fain learn the news of which thou art the bearer; thou art full young to be in the confidence of generals-in-chief, and the bearer of messages of invasion, as I doubt not thou art. Thou hast letters?"

"None, reverend father, or, rather, chevalier, for it were best we both drop the monk in this conference."

"Ha! how say you? no despatches? Come you not from the American leader, Arnold?" demanded the chevalier, sternly, and eyeing him suspiciously.

"I do, sir chevalier. He lies not fifteen leagues hence, with an effective force of twelve hundred men."

"So near, and with such a force!" exclaimed the chevalier, his eye rekindling; "by the mass,

I feel young again! In what direction is this army?"

"South."

"South! Have you then effected a march through the wilderness?"

"We have, chevalier—a long and tedious one."

"'Tis nobly, gallantly done. What cannot be accomplished with such brave men! Quebec, thou shalt once more change masters! Colonel Arnold communicated with me when the expedition was first suggested; but that it should have been already so far matured is beyond my fondest hopes. When did you leave the camp?"

"Yesterday morning. Colonel Arnold sent me from thence with verbal instructions only, requiring me to use all diligence to reach this monastery, where I should find the chevalier De Levi in the guise of the pious and learned father Etienne, who would forward me with all expedition on my further journey, providing both fast horses and faithful guides."

"Ha! and whither?" inquired the chevalier

eagerly, at the same time cautiously turning the key in the door of his study.

“ To Trois Rivières. You are acquainted with the destination of the army, chevalier ?” he interrogated, doubtingly.

“ No ; your commanding officer, with whom I have corresponded heretofore on other subjects, informed me of the proposed expedition in a brief note in cipher, at the same time soliciting my co-operation, and offering me a command ; he merely stated that he should march some time in September, and would give me early notice of his arrival in the vicinity of St. Claude. I therefore look to you for those details of the expedition of which I am ignorant.”

“ There is little to narrate, save the history of a tedious march of thirty days through a dreary wilderness, the difficulties of which were increased by morasses, rapid torrents, and high and rugged mountains, where the order of march was broken up, while each soldier, hastening with the best speed which hunger, cold, and fatigue, would permit, strove to gain the frontier.”

“ But do twelve hundred men comprise your whole force for an enterprise so great as the invasion of Canada ?”

“ But one division of the invading army, chevalier. General Montgomery, in person, commands the first division, which was to march into Canada by Lake Champlain simultaneously with our own ; by this time Montgomery must be in the neighbourhood of Montreal, and perhaps master of it. I am despatched by colonel Arnold with the information of his having arrived at the head-waters of the Chaudiere, and in less than ten days will be opposite Quebec, to effect a junction with him ; the co-operation of the two armies will doubtless insure the subjugation of the capital, and ultimately the whole territory of the Canadas.”

“ It is a noble and well-matured enterprise,” exclaimed the chevalier with animation, “ and it must succeed : the garrison at Quebec is small, and cannot hold out against an energetic attack. Please God, the time has at length come when the Canadian shall no longer blush to own his country ! But,” he added, after surveying the

officer for a moment, and remarking his youthful appearance, "methinks you are but a young soldier to be the medium of communication between two armies at a crisis so important. I am surprised," he continued, to himself, half aloud, while his brow clouded, "that colonel Arnold should have chosen a beardless boy on so dangerous a mission. I fear, sir," he added, addressing him, "that you may prove too inexperienced for the task to which you have been appointed. By the mass! I would that your chief had chosen a more fitting messenger."

"Sir chevalier," replied the young soldier, with spirit, "wisdom is not always found with grey hairs, nor is age the infallible test of experience. If devotion to the cause I have voluntarily embraced may be thrown into the scale against my youth, and if indifference to danger may be allowed to balance inexperience, then am I a fitting messenger."

"You have spoken well, young sir," replied the old soldier, with a smile of approbation; "but you have undertaken an enterprise, which age, wisdom, courage, and even patriotism, may

hardly be able to accomplish. Bethink you," he added, gazing upon the animated countenance of the young adventurer, and mentally resolving to dissuade one, in whom he already felt no inconsiderable degree of interest, from pursuing a long journey necessarily attended with danger, "bethink you, young sir, it is a score of leagues to the St. Lawrence, and your road lies through an enemy's country."

"I have measured on foot half that distance since yesterday's sunrise."

"The rumour of your army's approach will fly before you, and in every man who crosses your path you will encounter a foe."

"For this too I am prepared," was the quiet reply, "and because it is a service of danger and adventure, therefore am I here: there does not seem to me any thing very appalling in the face of a foeman. I carry," he added, pointing to his pistols, "two men's lives at my belt."

"Rash and inconsiderate!" said the chevalier, in a stern displeased tone, turning away; "there is that in the hot blood of youth which unfits them as agents in schemes that require

the least grain of either caution or secrecy: by the mass! I would rather trust a woman: to resent a hasty buffet or a fierce look, they will sacrifice the noblest enterprises ever men set on foot. But now," he continued, abruptly addressing him, "I would have dissuaded thee from putting thyself in peril from compassion for thy youth, and a certain interest I felt in thy welfare, proposing to send one more experienced in thy stead; now I would dissuade thee on account of thy unfitness for an enterprise where coolness and discretion are in demand." The chevalier having thus spoken, folded his arms moodily, and turning away towards the window, appeared to have lost all confidence in the discretion of the young officer.

The blood of the latter mounted to his brow, and with an emotion between mortification and resentment, he said—"If it had been my humour, sir chevalier, or sir priest, to have fought my way to the St. Lawrence, proclaiming myself the herald of an invading army, and entering into a brawl with every boor who crossed my path, I should not have adopted this monkish

guise. To prove its efficiency and my discretion," he added, smiling, and catching the eye of the chevalier as he turned round, with an apology on his tongue, "a brief hour ago I conferred the kiss of sisterhood on the ruby lips of the fair Jaquette, the buxom rib of honest Francois—doubtless thou knowest whom I mean, good father—and that in the happy husband's presence. If this disguise will baffle a husband's penetration at such a time, I think I have no fear of detection elsewhere."

"Not," said the chevalier, his good-humour restored, "not unless thy cowl fail to conceal thy beardless cheek; for by the mass! in such a mischance thou wouldst be seized as a strolling wench in masquerade, and so equally defeat our purpose; yet for a mere youth thou art a proper man, and might teach older heads than thine own. So thou wilt go forward then, on this dangerous journey?"

"So will I, sir chevalier; and I pray you give me horse and guide, and bid me God speed."

"Then if thou wilt, God speed thee! but I

fear, nevertheless, thou wilt swing, ere many days be past, over the Prescott gate of Quebec as a rebel spy. Keep thy hood close, and let the lasses alone, and it may save thy neck. When wilt thou take horse?"

"This hour," replied the young soldier, preparing to resume his disguise.

"This hour! that mettle rings well; carry this promptness of action with thee, young man, into the world thou art just entering, and it will insure thee success in the field or in the cabinet, or wherever thy destinies lead thee. To such energies as thine nothing will seem impossible. Whatever thou dost resolve thou wilt achieve, and the difficulties thou mayest encounter in the pursuit of an object will augment, in the same proportion, thy diligence. *Nil desperandum* is the motto of such a mind as thine. I am no necromancer, but I am deeply read in the countenances of men; they have been my books for nearly half a century, and their language is as familiar to me as the characters on this lettered page. I have studied thy face, and could tell thee what thou art, and if life be granted

thee, what thou mayest be. Ambition is the idol of thy worship, but like Mark Antony, thou wilt set up Cleopatra beside it. Beware whom thou trustest ; most of all, beware of thyself, and thy wildest dreams may yet be realized."

The old chevalier uttered these words with a prophetic energy, and his eyes kindled with enthusiasm ; but when he had ceased speaking, the unwonted excitement disappeared from his features, not gradually, as it would go from the face of youth, but like a lamp suddenly extinguished, his countenance all at once became calm and divested of every emotion.

The young soldier fixed his dark eyes with astonishment upon the enthusiastic priest while he was speaking, and when he had concluded, replied with a heightened colour and flashing eye—" Noble chevalier, I know not if you are a true prophet or no. My heart or my wishes tell me you speak truly. It is indeed my ambition to overtop my fellow-men ; and rather than crawl unmarked among the common herd, and fill, when all is done, a nameless grave——"

" Hold—no more ! tell not the friendly wind

that fans thy cheek in summer, nor whisper to the senseless blade, whose hilt thou hast grasped so tightly, what thou wilt do ! The camp is the fit school in which to tame and train such a spirit as thine ; 'twill teach thee to measure thy words by line and plumb, and that to veil thy thoughts with language foreign to their bent, is the better part of wisdom. By the mass ! these young soldiers are either hot or cold, till stern experience, with gauntlet on fist, pummels them lukewarm. But I have forgotten thy claims on my hospitality."

" I have already supped," said his guest, as the chevalier rose to order refreshments ; " and that too, beneath a roof," he added, smiling archly, " where fair hands displayed their culinary skill."

" Then Francois hath played the host as well as ferryman ?"

" Even so."

" And if my memory doth not play me false, thou didst speak of having sweet lips for thy dessert. By the mass ! then thou canst not well

relish such fare as my poor larder affords ; but if thou hast feasted, thou hast not slept. If thou canst rest on a priest's bed, thou may'st there," he added, pointing to the cott on one side of the apartment, " woo a maiden whom weary travellers seldom woo in vain ; for myself, thy stirring news hath once more roused the soldier in me, and will, for this night at least, chase sleep from my eyelids. While thou art seeking that repose so needful for thee, I will plan thy morrow's journey, and afterward prepare such despatches for my political associates, as the news of this welcome invasion shall make expedient. Thou canst not ride before the dawn, when a fleet horse and a faithful guide shall await thee on the mainland. So, fair sir, to thy pillow, for thou wilt find couch nor pillow more between this and thy journey's end."

" Then will I be chary as the jealous husband of his young wife's charms, of what favours the maiden you speak of shall bestow," said the youth gaily, spreading, as he spoke, his monk's gown upon the floor ; " I will not rob you of your couch so hospitably offered, but

throw myself before this warm fire, upon this plank; 'tis a bed of down compared with the rough lodgings I have shared of late. May it please you, wake me by the earliest dawn, sir chevalier?" he added, stretching himself before the stove, and composing himself to rest.

"That thou may'st depend upon, young soldier," replied the chevalier, seating himself by the table, and preparing his writing materials for present use. "Every moment," he murmured to himself, as he took his pen and commenced writing, "is big with great events, and one hour too soon or late, may make or mar what centuries cannot repair." In a few moments he was deeply absorbed in writing, while his guest, wrapped in his robe, slept with the quiet and deep repose of an infant.

CHAP. III.

The Alarm.

AFTER the fall of the chivalrous Montcalm before the walls of Quebec, and the subsequent surrender of that city to the British troops, the fate of the French dominion in the Canadas was virtually decided; nevertheless, the French entertained hopes of reversing this decision, by recapturing Quebec. The chevalier De Levi, at that period, was an intrepid and experienced soldier in the prime of life, and distinguished as a leader; he had been trained in the European wars, was a Canadian by birth, and a zealous and enthusiastic patriot. After the death of Montcalm, he assembled the remnant of the Canadian forces, and in a few weeks collected an army, composed of regular soldiers and armed

peasantry, amounting in all to nearly twelve thousand men. With this formidable force he marched upon Quebec, but was encountered a few miles from its gates, on the twentieth of April, seventeen hundred and sixty, by the British general Murray, who, learning his intentions, had issued from the fortress with three thousand troops to offer him battle.

The hostile armies met within a few miles of Quebec, and furiously engaged. The battle was contested with the utmost obstinacy for two hours, the chevalier himself mingling in the thickest of the fight, and performing deeds of valour not unworthy a brave knight of ancient romance. General Murray was at length compelled to retire upon Quebec, with the loss of more than one thousand men, killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, leaving all his baggage and field-artillery to the victors. The loss in the chevalier's army was nearly twenty-five hundred men. Animated with his success, he followed the defeated Murray with spirit, and laid siege to the city, within which he had withdrawn. It was on the point of capitulating, when the

garrison was relieved by the arrival of a fleet, bringing a detachment of British soldiers. The chevalier, with an undisciplined army, was unable to contend successfully against fresh troops, and raising the siege, made a precipitate retreat. His followers dispersed, and the fallen chief found himself at sunset deserted by every one save a single attendant, already introduced to the reader as the porter Homfroy.

Despairing of any present means of expelling the conquerors of his native country, the chevalier De Levi retired into the monastery of St. Claude, then a thriving community, although, at the period of the disguised young officer's visit to the father Etienne, the name assumed by the military recluse, it was only a ruined asylum for a few aged priests. Were we to weigh carefully the motives that induced the unsuccessful soldier to take this pious step, we should perhaps find them composed in part of a desire to bury his own disgrace from the world—in part of a morbid melancholy, the consequence of his defeat and disappointment, a disposition of the mind which often drives men both to the church

and the cloister ; but we should also find that he was governed by a deeper feeling than either of these. Aware that the priesthood were generally disaffected with the existing government, his main object was to attach himself to this body, that, by the aid of so vast an engine of political power, and under the cover of a monastic life, he might combine a conspiracy against the new government, and, when it should become fully matured, apply the torch to the train he had laid, and spread a revolutionary flame like wildfire throughout the territory.

Such were the motives which converted the chevalier De Levi into father Etienne. His schemes, however, never ripened into maturity ; and though always planning and plotting, with a perseverance and secrecy not unworthy of Lucius Cataline, and constantly corresponding with the disaffected in every quarter of Canada, and even with ambitious individuals in the British colonies, among whom, as has already been intimated, was the leader of the eastern division of the invading army, yet on the day we intruded

into his retirement, he was as remote from his object, so far as the restoration of the French dominion was concerned, as on the first day he assumed the religious habit.

By long devotion to one sole object, from which nothing could make him swerve, aided by an active imagination, and a sanguine temperament, the chevalier had become transformed from a calm and dispassionate patriot, devoting himself to his country, into a settled monomaniac. To such a mind, therefore, the threatened invasion, although it did not embrace its long-cherished and favourite project, was, nevertheless, welcome intelligence, inasmuch as it would be at least the instrument of overthrowing the government of his conquerors. This object effected, the restoration of the old Canadian *régime* he was willing to confide to the course of events.

Inspired, therefore, with renewed ardour in the cause to which he had devoted his life, by these tidings of invasion, with his eyes sparkling and his hands trembling with excitement, he seated himself at the table, as the young soldier

threw himself upon the floor to sleep, and soon became involved in a manifold correspondence. His arguments were skilfully adapted to the circumstances and prejudices of those to whom his letters were addressed. To the disaffected priest, and there were many such throughout the Canadas, he held out the restoration of the Roman Catholic ascendancy, and the return of the golden days of papal regality. Before the imagination of those Canadian gentlemen who desired a change of government, he displayed gorgeous pictures of titles and dignities, and predicted the restitution of their alienated privileges and honours ; while the eyes of *one* individual, of high birth, and once in power, were dazzled with the glitter of a vice-regal crown : no scheme, however wild, seemed impracticable to the mind of this visionary enthusiast. Finally, in addressing a distinguished primate, whose good sense, he was sufficiently aware, would not be blinded either by his sophistry or arguments, however plausible, and who, he was convinced, would withhold his name and influence until

there remained no doubt of the re-establishment of the Catholic, or, which was virtually the same thing, the Canadian ascendancy, he hinted that the American army was but a few thousand strong, that they should be supported by an active co-operation on the part of the Canadians until they had captured Quebec. "Then, if the partisan leaders are alive to their own interests, which," he continued, "I myself will undertake to be the active instrument in awakening, in the unguarded moment of victory, and by the aid of superior numbers, we can snatch the citadel from their grasp, and, please God, the flag of France will once more float above its towers." The crafty politician facetiously closed his diplomatic letter by relating the fable of the "Monkey and Cat's-paw."

He had folded, and was preparing to seal his letters, when the deep silence of the apartment, which for the last half-hour had only been interrupted by the busy scratching of his pen and the light breathing of the sleeper, was broken by a loud and lamentable wail from the river, accompanied by the baying and howling of a dog.

The next moment it was repeated still more appallingly, and soon after answered by a voice beneath the tower. The cry was a third time heard, and the voice below again answered it back, but now in a loud key of surprise and alarm, so wild and shrill, that it chilled the blood of the chevalier, and started the sleeper to his feet; at the same time the bell in the turret above their heads began to ring, breaking upon the stillness of the night with its untimely clamour.

“ God of heaven ! what means this alarm ?” cried the youth, laying his hand on his sword-hilt as he sprung to his feet.

“ By the mass, I know not !” replied the chevalier, disengaging the lamp from the chain by which it hung, and taking a rapier from behind his bookcase ; “ one would think the Philistines were upon us.”

“ List !” said the young soldier, as the cry was repeated in a fainter key, “ there is a man drowning in the river ; hasten to his rescue.” The impatient youth seized the lamp in the hands of the chevalier, and closely followed by

him, darted through the gallery, and descended into the hall beneath. Here he was met by an old monk, one of the chevalier's household, his eyes starting from their sockets, his whole frame shaking with terror, and his pale lips trembling with a scarcely articulate oxorcism. "The matter! the cry! what means it?" almost fiercely interrogated the youth, grasping him by the shoulder.

"*Salve, Domine!* Oh! oh! (*in profundis*) I had been talking a little gossip with good Homfroy, and sipping a little posset for my old body's sake; and while we were sitting there, as innocent as two young virgins, what should we hear but a cry from the water. Oh Lord! oh! I looked out, and there was the old enemy, black as pitch, with horns and hoofs, and tail, (*salve, Domine*) and I shrieked with fear, and would have fallen into a swoon, but——"

"Haste ye, haste ye, reverend fathers, there is life and death in thy speed!" shouted Homfroy, as the impatient young man flung the old monk from him; "a perishing creature is struggling in the ice, midway the river."

“ The ice, Homfroy !” repeated the chevalier, as he waited for him to undo the bolt.

“ The ice is as thick as this bar. I looked from my window to answer the call, and saw the moon glistening on it as if 'twere polished steel.”

As Homfroy spoke the last word and drew back his last bolt, they rushed past him and hastened to the shore, followed at a more moderate rate by the less agile porter and his gossip monk, whose terrors could neither keep him within the convent, nor paralyze his tongue when without. The atmosphere was still intensely cold, but the moon had risen, and now shed her clear light over forest and river, while the dewy particles upon the grass, crystallized by the frost, reflected her beams, and gave to the sward the appearance of glittering with myriads of minute diamonds. From shore to shore the river was bound in a transparent sheet of ice, and under the action of the sharp air, the process of congelation was going forward with a celerity to be accredited only by those who

have sailed upon a lake at sunset, and crossed it the succeeding sunrise in a carriage.

On arriving at the beach, the attention of the party was directed to a man, whose outline was distinctly visible by the light of the moon, sitting in a boat, which appeared to be fast bound in the ice in the middle of the river, and feebly shouting for aid, while beside him, with his fore paws upon his breast, stood a large dog, whose howls rose above the faint cries of the man.

“ It is Francois,” cried the young soldier.

He had scarcely spoken, when a shriek from the opposite shore fell piercingly on his ear.

“ The saints have mercy !” ejaculated the chevalier, “ there is Jaquette’s voice. Francois ! poor Francois !”

“ ’Tis two good hours since Francois left,” said Homfroy, who now joined the group, puffing and blowing with such unusual exertion, for Homfroy’s figure was of Falstaffian dimensions ; “ it cannot be Francois ; he is in bed long since.”

But the reiterated shrieks from the mainland,

and the thrilling repetition of the name of Francois in a voice of agony, sufficiently betrayed the sufferer, whose shouts, growing feebler every moment, had now died away into an occasional moan.

“ Poor Francois !” said the chevalier, “ he has got benumbed and frozen up in crossing, and is now past exerting himself farther : before the ice will be strong enough to bear a man’s weight he will be beyond all human aid. Something must be done, please God, and that quickly. By the mass ! I haven’t felt such an air since the winter of fifty-five, when I was in the Russian wars ! How is the ice ?”

The young stranger, who had been actively proving its strength with Homfroy’s staff, replied despondingly—“ Frail enough !” and pressing upon it with his foot, he added, “ it will not bear my own light weight. But he must not perish while there exists any means of saving him. Have you a boat on the island ?”

“ *Malheur !* a boat ? No, no,” replied old Homfroy, shaking his head, “ a boat can do no good.”

“ Not a board—a plank—a fragment of anything ?” he continued, traversing the bank in search of something to aid his philanthropic exertions, and maddened by the shrieks of Jaquette.

“ There are some remains of an old boat on the bank above,” cried the chevalier, eagerly. “ Haste and bring them, all of ye,” he added to Homfroy and three or four monks, whom the alarm had drawn from the cells. “ *Ca, courage !* my son,” he shouted to the sufferer, whose moans had now entirely ceased, “ thou shalt yet lift thy voice in many a merry stave.”

The young stranger, assisted by the chevalier and his companions, soon collected on the verge of the ice several broken planks from the wreck, and with skill and celerity he set about constructing a square frame or hurdle, strengthening it by transverse pieces well secured with cords, which the mother-wit of Homfroy instructed him to draw from a bedstead in one of the deserted cells of the monastery. With the united efforts of the whole party, some minutes were required to complete it. Launching it on the ice, the youth, with a long pole in his hand,

placed himself fearlessly but cautiously upon it, and to the surprise of the monks, by this application of a simple principle in philosophy, of increasing the surface of the weight to be supported, he was sustained where otherwise he would have broken through. With gentle force he pushed from the bank, amid the mingled blessings and prayers of the monks, and the encouraging exhortations of the chevalier.

The undulation of the ice at first filled them with apprehensions for the safety of the intrepid youth. With his person erect and immovable, he struck out with his pole alternately on each side, changing it from hand to hand with surprising dexterity, aware that his safety and success depended upon the velocity with which he glided over the surface of the ice, and that the briefest pause thereon, or the least obstruction, would be fatal both to himself and the individual for whom, with such presence of mind and insensibility to danger, he had perilled his life. The cries of the sufferer had ceased for several minutes before he left the shore, and the shrieks of Jaquette, whom he could distinguish

on the bank wringing her hands, and surrounded by her children and neighbours, had subsided into a low wailing. Apprehensive that his aid would arrive too late, he exerted himself to such good purpose, that in a few seconds after leaving the land he came swiftly alongside of the boat, into which he leaped, with the glad shouts of the spectators on the island ringing in his ears, while a cry of joy from the mainland assured him, that his motions were not unwatched by one who felt no common interest in his success; and the passing reflection rewarded him for all he had done.

The boat was firmly bound in the ice, which had been broken up about the bow and stern; but the fragments had again united, and showed that the sufferer had for some time ceased his exertions to extricate himself. Francois, for it was the light-hearted peasant, was seated on the bow-thwart of his boat, with one arm round the neck of his faithful dog, and with his face turned towards his cottage, as if he sought to die with his last look upon his beloved home, his last gaze upon the partner of his bosom and his sweet

babes—alas! the home whose threshold he was never to cross more, the wife and babes he was never again to embrace! The young stranger placed his hand on his heart and temples. The pulse of life had for ever ceased to vibrate; his eyes were closed; his head rested upon one shoulder, and his countenance was as calm and peaceful as if he only slept; he seemed to have passed without pain from the sleep of the living into the deep sleep of the dead.

“ Can this be death? so calm, so placid, like one in pleasant and quiet slumber!” thought the young man, as he gazed upon his serene countenance by the clear light of the moon; “ desirable, indeed, must be that mode of death which leaves the dead so like the living!”

For a few seconds he gazed on the placid face of the dead Francois, lost in these reflections, and forgetting for a moment the circumstances in which he was placed, when a shout from the chevalier, asking if Francois was alive, aroused him.

He cast his eyes, without replying, towards the spot where stood Jaquette, awaiting the re-

sult in deathlike silence. Unused to death in any shape, and shocked at the fearful end of his late host, whose lot a brief while before he had compared with his own and envied, he uttered an impatient imprecation against the wretchedness so profusely mingled in the cup of life ; and then, overcome with emotion as he thought of the blow about to fall upon the unprotected family, he remained for several seconds incapable of speaking. This tribute to his heart and to human nature was, however, but momentary.

“ *Hola, brave youth !*” again shouted the chevalier, “ how fares it with worthy Francois ? Haste with him to the shore, or thou wilt need aid also.”

“ Francois is well,” replied the young officer, evasively.

At a loss whether to convey the corpse directly to the island, and, until morning, conceal his death from Jaquette, or at once let her know the full extent of her loss, he briefly considered the two modes, and finally decided on removing him immediately to the shore, and placing the body in her charge. He therefore transferred

the corpse, now become rigid as marble, to the hurdle, and pushed towards the bank. He moved with difficulty, for his body was already penetrated by the insinuating frost; his hands were nearly deprived of all sensibility, and an oppressive drowsiness, to which he knew it would be fatal to yield, had seized him. As the hurdle touched the bank before her cottage, Jaquette rushed forward, and fell lifeless upon the icy body of her husband.

A number of peasants, alarmed by the shouting and the ringing of the convent bell, had already collected on the shore; these he directed to convey the body to the cottage. Several females took charge of the insensible Jaquette, and bearing her to her dwelling, carried her into an inner room. The young soldier followed them to the cottage and remained in the outer apartment, where, the evening before, he had supped with the happy family under circumstances so opposite to the present, and superintended the laying out of the body. He gave, in a tone of authority, such directions as the event rendered necessary to the neighbours of Francois,

who had assembled at the house of mourning, until the room was filled with a wondering and horror-stricken crowd.

Although his instructions were obeyed with alacrity, they served to draw the attention of the peasants to the speaker, of whose intrepidity several of them had been witnesses. At length he observed that they whispered apart together, and that the eyes of one or two, of rougher exterior and more reckless bearing than their fellows, were directed towards him with glances of suspicion; at the same moment he discovered that his disguise, which he had hastily resumed on starting from sleep, was disarranged, and that a portion of his military dress and the butt of a pistol, were visible through its folds.

He therefore waited for an opportunity to withdraw from the room and cottage unobserved, when, hastening to the shore, he re-crossed the ice, now firm enough to bear his footsteps, and returned to the monastery, where he found the chevalier with his companions congregated in Homfroy's well-warmed room, impatiently awaiting tidings from the shore.

On being once more alone with the chevalier in his closet, he informed him of the death of Francois, and of the unlucky exposure of his profession before the peasants, and insisted on taking his leave immediately, as the appearance of an officer disguised as a monk would be food for gossip, and, perhaps, ultimately lead to unpleasant consequences, particularly if by any means it should be rumoured that an American army was approaching.

The chevalier approved of his plan; and taking from the table the letters he had written during the night, they left the monastery together, and crossing to the mainland, proceeded towards the cottage of the deceased Francois.

"Remain without until I come forth," said the chevalier to his companion, placing his hand upon the latch of the door as he spoke.

In a few minutes he came out, followed by an awkward, ungainly clown, stoutly built, with square shoulders, a stolid look, and a skulking air, like that of a whipped schoolboy. He appeared to be about twenty-six years of age, and was dressed in the usual garb of his class; his

clothes, nevertheless, were much too small for him, and his bonnet much too large.

“ Here is the guide who will direct you to the house of the vicaire Ducosse, ten leagues down the valley, to whom you will bear a letter; there,” added the chevalier, in a lower tone, “ you will obtain another guide. The vicaire you may safely trust. Jacques, conduct the reverend father to thy cottage, and with all diligence saddle thy two horses, and mount, and, by the mass! see that thou spare neither hide nor spur. I have told thee wherefore he travels, and it is a matter on thy conscience that thou doest my bidding; so haste, and make ready for thy speedy journey. Young sir,” he added, addressing the disguised soldier, “ I have, for the present, hushed all suspicion among the peasants within the cottage; all will now depend upon your caution. Here are certain despatches, which I pray you to place with all safety into the hands of the father Guise, who resides at the last post on your route; you will reach it with hard riding by sunset the day after to-morrow. He will attend to their delivery, according to their seve-

ral superscriptions. In this paper you will find directions for your route; and here is an epistle introductory to brother vicaire Ducosse. Farewell, my young friend; God and the saints guide you on your way! Be wise, and you will be successful. Your guide, Jacques, who is a mere animal, you may always trust; his dread of the pains of purgatory, with which, as father Etienne, I have threatened him, if he be faithless or lacking in his duty, is a better guarantee for his honesty, than if he were your sworn friend and brother. So good night, for, peradventure, you are the messenger of a nation's fate." Thus speaking, and warmly grasping his hand, he separated from him and re-entered the cottage.

The monk, as we shall once more term the disguised soldier, followed his guide at a rapid pace along a narrow path which wound by the banks of the river. After a walk of half a mile, they stopped before a cottage, resembling, but less picturesque, that of the unfortunate Francois.

“ Enter, father, and warm thy limbs by the embers,” said the guide, opening its only door, “ and I’ll get ready the nags.”

“ I will help you,” replied the impatient traveller; “ we can both get warm enough by riding; the sooner we mount and are on our road the better.”

He followed his guide through a rude gate into a low stable constructed of logs, where stood two small and spirited Canadian horses, of a breed remarkable for their hardihood; they were soon caparisoned and at the door. Before mounting, the peasant entered his cabin, and exchanged the bonnet he wore for a cap of furs, enveloped his body in a capote of fox skins, and drawing on a pair of boots, and then a pair of gloves, lined with dog skin, with the fur on the outside, said he was ready to ride; at the same time he presented the monk with similar garments, as a necessary protection against the severity of the cold. He gladly accepted and enveloped himself in these comfortable Canadian defences against the rigour of their climate, and drawing his priestly frock over all, mounted and

followed his guide, who, starting off at a gallop, rode rapidly in a northerly direction, and along a beaten path which led for many miles beside the banks of the river.

CHAP. IV.

The Oath.

AT daybreak the ensuing morning, the monk and his guide were full five leagues from the monastery of St. Claude, and pursuing their journey at a rapid rate through a dense forest, along a road which led to a hamlet of a few cottages, situated on the eastern bank of the Chaudiere. As the morning dawned, the cold became more intense, increased by a sharp wind that rose with the sun; and as the travellers gained the brow of a hill, from which they

caught a view of the distant hamlet, it became so severe, that its effect upon any portion of the skin exposed to its penetrating influence, was like that of fire.

The cautious guide was so completely enveloped in his furs, that there remained scarcely a crevice for his vision, choosing rather that the animal he rode should be left to his own instinct for pursuing the path, than that his person should suffer by needless exposure.

The monk, incautious, and evidently less experienced in the severities of a Canadian winter, as they descended the hill, lifted his visor to survey the far-extended prospect of wood, vale, and river, before him. He immediately cried out with pain, experiencing, as the piercing wind touched his cheek and forehead, a burning sensation, as if his skin had been exposed to the hot blast of a sirocco. Following the example of his guide, he enveloped his face in the furs, repeating the language of Milton, in describing the abode of Satan—

“ The parching air

Burns froze (frozen), and cold performs the effect of fire.”

“ The hamlet thou didst see from the hill aback be where we'll get fresh nags,” growled the guide through his furred hood, as they reached the plain on which the hamlet was situated, and were riding along under the protection of the forest. Not receiving any answer, he rode to the side of the monk, who had kept in advance, and continued, in the tone of one who wished to be companionable—“ By St. Claude o' the island ! a fire and a cup o' wine would be none the worse for thee or I. Faith, sir, my voice sticks to my jaws !”

“ *Vox faucibus hæsit*,” said the monk in reply ; “ this frost makes your speech classical, Jacques ; and that too, without the knowledge of your wits, I'll be sworn ! But Virgil was a peasant like yourself, and why may not the same base earth that has once yielded gold, yield gold again ?”

“ Anan, father !” slowly responded the stolid peasant, “ I know not what thou sayest, tho' an' thou do speak about this here land, then I can tell 'un never better soil was ploughed than be in this plain. But, most worshipful, I'se not

over wise in holy things; and by thy leave, as thou didst but now swear by thyself, may I ask 'un if or no it be a deadly sin, worthy o' purgatory, to make oath by one's self? not that thou canst so sin, holy father, or the church vicaires; no, the saints forbid! It were a good thing to be a savoury priest, and swear betimes. Save us! the godly father Etienne rippeth out oaths on occasion like a very Turk. Canst tell me, most worshipful, if't be a deadly sin or no?"

"What may be your especial motive, honest Jacques, in seeking to be instructed in so weighty a matter?" asked the monk, gravely.

"Hark ye, holy priest," answered Jacques, in a lower voice, whipping up his jaded steed, and riding closer to the monk's ear, "I would give the best sheep, save the old wether, o' the last year's droppin', and a fat gobbler to boot, to roast for thy Christmas dinner, if thou wouldst give me dispensation to swear roundly by my beard, without the fear o' the pains o' purgatory."

"Ha, Jacques, is it so? I fear the devil is tempting thee to sin," said the monk, solemnly;

"thou need'st, rather, that I should appoint fasts and penance for the good of thy soul."

"Na, na, seven thousand saints forbid!" he answered, hastily, and devoutly crossing himself; "but it were a brave circumstance to swear stoutly when one is with his mates. Wilt take the sheep and fat gobbler, father?"

"Alas, my son! wouldst thou corrupt the church? Thy speech savoureth of mammon. Surely Beelzebub hath possessed thee!"

"Hout, na, most worshipful! but 'tis just thus," responded Jacques, with more animation than he had yet evinced: "I go to mass every Sabbath-day, keep saints' day, and holy day, pay my tithe of grain, like a seigneur, to the vicaires (saving hay and potatoes, which holy church asketh not), confess on new-year's eve, as I hope to do the next one, with help o' the good Virgin, nor do I take oath, save by St. Claude, or the Virgin, or the saints, and such like holy and worshipful oaths, 'gainst which there can be found no scripture, saith porter Homfroy, who is learned in holy things, though there be a commandment, he hath told me, 'gainst for-

swearing by one's-self, or the hairs of one's beard. It were a brave oath for a proper man, father, this swearing by one's beard."

"Thou sayest well, Jacques; 'twere a most valiant oath—a gallant, and withal a fierce oath. But wherefore, save it in fitness for thy manhood, wouldst thou fortify thy speech by an oath so truculent?"

"Methinks, most worshipful, if I could swear stoutly by my beard, when I get back among my mates, they'll no longer let me keep i' the corner, or shove me out o' the way, as if I be not a human being, and a lad o' mettle, like that loud-swearing Luc Giles, who swears by his beard like a trooper, or even a worshipful priest, bidding me do this and bidding me do that with a ripping oath, that makes the blood run cold to my fingers' ends; and maybe, if I am not quick enough to suit his humour, comes a knock on the head, and he but a ploughman like myself; but it comes of swearing by his beard—so fearful 'tis to hear him, father!"

"But if there be such valiancy in this oath thou speakest of, worthy Jacques," observed the

monk, "what should hinder thee from using a weapon thou hast seen so formidable in the mouths of others? Trust me, Jacques, that fellow's courage lieth altogether in his beard, as thou hast heard the strength of Samson did in his hair."

"By St. Claude, most worshipful," replied Jacques, with more confidence in his tone, "thou sayest truly. I would," he added, looking on all sides cautiously, and lowering his voice, "I would not be afraid to make oath he had a chicken's liver. Wilt give me dispensation, father?"

"Why ask it, my son? I don't believe this same Luc Giles hath received it."

"He!" exclaimed Jacques, in a tone of contempt, "not unless he got it from the devil; he is devil-born, father, fearing neither God nor man, and mocks at holy things. He did only yesterday say," continued Jacques, crossing himself with holy horror, "that there was no part of the true cross to be found, and that if all the pieces said to be of the true cross were put to-

gether, they would build a church as big as a cathedral."

"Sacrilegious unbeliever and heretic!" exclaimed the monk.

"So I told him, and he gave me a buffet on the cheek, and bid me begone for a drivelling papist. If thou wilt give me this dispensation, most worshipful," said Jacques, perseveringly returning to the subject of his application, "by the holy St. Claude, an' if I do not swear by my beard, in the face of that cock-o'-the-roost, Luc Giles, when next he bids me for an ass do this, and for a runt do that—ay, and look at him fiercely in such a fashion, that he shall go fling his oaths at other cattle, then call me coward, that's all."

"Then a good round oath by thy beard will make this cock-o'-the-roost, whose spurs have goaded thy valiant spirit, cut his own comb?"

"Ay, will it, most worshipful," replied the belligerently-minded Jacques, with confidence in his tone.

"Then, honest Jacques, swear by thy beard till it be grey, and I will warrant thee dispensa-

tion from purgatory, if thou take oath by each particular hair," replied the monk, spurring forward his tired horse; and adding, as they trotted into the hamlet which they had beheld before them for some time, "here now is our resting-place; practise, if thou wilt, thy magic oath a little on the inmates of yonder hostelry, that we may speedily get food and fresh horses."

"By my beard, will I!" responded Jacques, stoutly, "and see thou, most worshipful, if they stir not their clumsy limbs to good purpose." Thus speaking, he applied whip and spur to the flanks of his pony, and throwing himself off before the door of the inn, held the bridle of the monk's horse while he dismounted, and then began to call lustily upon the inmates.—"Hola, ho! hola! will ye make a holy man wait all day in the cold, while ye are toasting your shins before a good fire? Come forth, I say!" he continued, hammering away at the door with the butt of his whip, "or, by my beard—ay, by each particular hair of my beard, will I break down thy crazy door! Stir thee, stir thee! Dost hear me take oath by my beard, and

movest not? Luc Giles would stir thy stumps, an' he swore at thee as he hath done at me. Ho! hola, ho!"

While he thus shouted, battering the door between every pause, an old woman, in a dark plaid *mantelet* lined with fur, a stuffed petticoat, gay moccasins, and a parti-coloured headdress, such as is worn by the female peasantry of Lower Canada, and resembling, as well as their other apparel, the costume of the peasantry of Normandy, opened the door, and confronted the travellers.—“Father, thy blessing,” she asked, reverently crossing her wrinkled forehead, and courtesying as her eye fell on the figure of the monk; “enter, and welcome. Cowl and cassock, though they seldom bring or leave a silver cross in a wayside inn, leave a holy one, which is better in these godless times, when heretics rule the land. What!” she exclaimed, in a very different key, as the monk, passing by her to the fire, left exposed in full view the form of the redoubtable Jacques, who on the first symptoms of an intention to remove the latch of the door from within, discreetly placed the monk’s

person between his own and the anticipated danger, for Jacques had travelled this road before, and knew with whom he had to do, "what, s't thou, thou brainless fool, who beat at a lone woman's door, as if thou wert a foraging viltiegeur, and swearing so loudly too by thy weazen-aced beard? Mercie! one would believe thou hadst one. The blessed Virgin spare thee what little wit thou hast, Jake," she added, more mildly; "but thou beest cold; come in, come in, and warm thee, poor helpless body! Jean will take thy nags, and I will see what I can cook up for thine and the father's appetite, for the cold morn has, no doubt, given it edge enough. But, Jake," she whispered in the ear of the guide, as he crossed the threshold, "on what message travels the holy man so early and at such speed, for thy nags smoke as if thou hadst not spared spur?"

"A brave monk, and a most worshipful, by my beard, mother Alice!" replied Jacques, in a patronising tone, but with the straightforward simplicity of a firm believer in what he uttered; 'he goeth to the great capital to shrive the

pope's sublime holiness, as Homfroy calleth him."

"Out upon thee, fool!" exclaimed the dame, indignantly, "who told thee that round lie? Dost not know, thou heathen, that the pope lives over the salt sea, and at need can shrive himself? Who gave thee such dolt's broth for thy gullet?"

"By my beard," responded Jacques, in defence, "so said the worshipful father Etienne! He bid me, too, to guide him to father Ducosse, and to tell thee, dame Alice, thou must give thy son Jean's ploughing-nags for the road, and take mine. I'll have them safe back in thy stalls by the morn."

"Hoit! and does he think I'm to lose a day's work o' the nags for naught? Did the father give thee silver, lad?" inquired the dame, with professional care of her own interest.

"Didst ever know priest give coin, mother? He bid me tell thee thou shouldst have absolution for thy life's sins when he next rides this way, an' thou properly do his bidding. And if

thou dost ask him, old mother, he'll give thee leave to swear by thy beard."

"I'd pull thy fool's beard, an' Heaven had given thee one, thou brainless idiot!" cried the old dame, in the height of her indignation, conscious that her chin would have done better credit to Jacques's oath than his own scantily-sown beard could have done; "I know not if thou art more fool than knave! But in—in with thee! Thou shalt have the nags, if 'twere only to be rid of thee," she said, in a mood between good-nature and ill-humour. "'Tis time the father had somewhat to break his fast."

Their meal, which she hastily prepared, was eaten with rapidity, and in silence. The fresh beasts were brought to the door, and resuming their furs, which they had laid aside as they seated themselves at the table, the travellers once more mounted their horses. The monk, as he rode past the door, bestowed with his solicited blessing a piece of money upon the hostess, accompanying it with a compliment on her fare. —"Mercie!" she cried, casting her eyes with astonishment upon his religious gown, as he

trotted off followed by Jacques, "he must be the holy pope himself, to give good silver with such a free hand; it's not the way o' the ordinary fathers I've met with in my day. I've lived threescore years and better, kept open hostel fourteen o' em come Christmas, and never till now did I see the colour of priest's coin; by the same token, they have often seen the colour o' mine. Well, 'tis good ringing silver," she concluded, dropping it on the stone step of the door before closing it, "and I'll keep it for luck."

The monk and his attendant mounted on fresh horses, now rode rapidly forward, their road still winding along the banks of the Chaudiere, which were bordered for many miles with larches, oaks, sycamores, elms, and cedars, some of them of immense size, and many retaining their dark mantles of evergreen, of which even winter could not rob them. Others, stripped of their summer foliage, flung abroad their scraggy and unsightly limbs, striking emblems of that desolation which winter, like an exulting conqueror, spreads over the smiling face of nature. The region through which they rode was diver-

sified by extensive pasture lands and well-stocked farms in a high state of cultivation; and as they proceeded, it became more populous. Here and there a church tower rose in the distance, hamlets and farm houses became more frequent, and on all sides the characteristic signs of a populous country were visible. The scenery constantly varied in its character, and often called forth expressions of admiration from the traveller, who frequently paused, breathing his horse the while, to gaze upon its sublime or picturesque features. At one time, the perspective combinations of the view changing with every mile they advanced, they wound through a deep gorge, worn by the river, here too wild and unruly to be confined by the grasp of winter, and pouring with velocity through its contracted bed, its surface broken into numerous cascades; at another time they skirted the base of lofty cliffs, wooded to their summits, and towering in savage grandeur above their heads; at another they ambled through a pleasant lane, bordered by fruit trees, with the white cottage of the *habitans* dispersed at intervals along their route; and now they tra-

versed a narrow dell shut in by hills cultivated to their tops, or some secluded vale, in which contentment and domestic peace seemed to have taken up their abode. The river, raging among rocks or tumbling in cascades, wild with overhanging cliffs, or embellished with beautiful islands, was a feature in every change of the panorama; even where its placid course was arrested, as it meandered through some interval, by the frost of the preceding night, its surface was as transparent as when, bearing the breast of the wild fowl or the skiff of the fisherman, it glided along between banks of summer foliage.

About an hour before noon, without having met with any obstacle or seen scarcely a human being, save occasionally a *bucheron* cleaving his winter's fuel in the forest, a few peasants labouring on their farms, a female or a group of children peeping through the windows of the closely-shut cabins, they arrived in sight of a stone house situated on the side of a hill facing the south.

"Yon be my journey's end, father," said Jacques, pointing to the habitation, "tho' if't

be thine or no, thy worshipful wisdom knoweth best. By my beard, father, the nags smell the fodder, and move brisker the latter end o' the way than at the outset!"

Indeed, the horses, with characteristic instinct, seemed to be equally aware with Jacques, that they were approaching their journey's end, or at least a baiting-place; for when the house appeared in sight they pricked up their ears, and set off at a vigorous pace, which they kept up until they arrived at the place of their destination. The house before which the wearied travellers drew up was a square stone edifice, two stories high, with a single wing, and surrounded by a piazza. A light portico protected the front entrance in winter, and shaded it in summer. It was separated from the road by a court, and accessible by a gravelled walk bordered by young evergreens, among which were the pine, hemlock, and hackmatack, or red larch.

Dismounting at the gateway of the court-yard, the traveller approached the dwelling, leaving the horses in charge of Jacques. Ascending the portico, he knocked at the door with a good

will, to which his half-frozen condition and impatience of delay contributed not a little. His summons was answered by the creaking of a bolt, and the next moment the appearance of a middle-aged man in the open door; he was attired in a dress half clerical, half laical, such as Catholic priests are wont to wear in their own houses. His visage was thin and cadaverous, and his frame large and bony; his countenance wore a mild and benevolent, yet indolent expression, while a twinkling grey eye beneath shaggy brows betrayed humour and intelligence.

“Benedicite!” he said, saluting the monk with grave politeness; “enter, brother, and share our genial fire, for that, I see, thou need’st most; meanwhile,” he added, with the ready hospitality of the Canadian clergy, “I’ll have thee food prepared, and see thy beasts safely housed. ’Tis a bitter day to be abroad. Winter hath come upon us *manibus pedibusque*, as the Latin hath it, which is to say, with tooth and nail; but it becometh me not to paraphrase the tongues to thee, erudite brother, albeit the habit

of holding converse daily with the specimen of Eve's kind, who ruleth my domestic matters, leadeth me to do it oftentimes incontinently; but, *scitè ac munditer condit cibos*, sayeth Plautus, which, in the vernacular, signifieth that she is a good cook. Her skill thou shalt try anon, as I perceive she hath already spread the board for the meridian repast."

"Reverend and learned curé," replied the monk, whom, while he was speaking, the host had ushered into a well-heated room, the agreeable temperature of which was preserved by a large fire blazing in the chimney, and a stove placed in the centre, "I honour the wisdom of your selection in so nice and difficult a matter as the choice of a cook, or *coquus*, as much as I respect your learning. While I do justice to her culinary talents, which, I doubt not, do infinite credit to your judgment, I will acquaint you with the cause of my intrusion into your domicilium."

The monk, who had intuitively caught and chimed in with the humour of his host during the progress of the meal, which, in passing, be

it remarked, was in every respect unexceptionable, related to him so much of his object as was necessary to insure his co-operation and present aid in forwarding him in security on his way; this was further insured through the influence of the chevalier's letter, which he at the same time gave him.

"Mehercule! worthy juvenis, or youth," exclaimed the curé, when he had completed the perusal of the letter, "thou hast begun young to go forth to the wars. But St. David slew Goliath—thou know'st the Vulgate, I doubt not, wherein the story is related at length?—and thy years, peradventure, may likewise do honour to the valiant man of war who sent thee on this perilous message. But, touching this epistle from brother Etienne," he said, looking over the letter once more, and then carefully folding it up, "I reply in the words of Tullius Cicero, '*Dum lego, assentior.*' Thou shalt be forwarded on thy journey forthwith, for the business thou hast in hand requireth diligence. The saints bring about that for which I long have wearied them, even the restoration of our church's dig-

nity and power in the land, and among the rulers thereof. But thou wilt not ride now, my son," he said, seeing his guest rise from the table, and prepare to resume his travelling apparel ; " all too soon, all too soon after eating.

' Post prandium stabis,
Post cen 'ambulabis,'

saith the school rhyme, which, in the vernacular, hath been rendered,

' After dinner sleep awhile,
After supper walk a mile.'

Verily, young cavalier, or brother—for thou art the one or the other—as I look either on thy quick eye and gallant bearing, or upon the cowl and gown, which, I cannot but observe, thou wearest after an ill and awkward fashion, I fear it is a scandal for the church's vestments to be put to such unseemly uses," he continued, sighing, and crossing himself with the wing of a chicken, with which his teeth had been busy while he was speaking. " Verily, thou must not leave me yet," he added, wiping his lips with a napkin, and pledging his guest in a cup of mild

wine; "I will first teach thee the *scientia popinæ*, or the art of concocting savoury messes, known and esteemed by the ancients, as thou mayst learn on reference——"

"Pardon me, learned curé," interrupted the monk, enveloping his head, as he spoke, in his fur bonnet, "I would gladly be your pupil in this honourable science, seeing that the generous repast I have but now partaken of bears testimony to its utility; but, if it be possible, I must be on horseback within the hour, as my next post is twelve leagues off, and I desire to be there before morning; therefore, father, you cannot better please me, or aid the cause you have at heart more, than by forwarding me on my journey at once. A fleet horse and a trusty guide were more acceptable than an abbot's feast."

"Thou shalt have both, *Deo volente*, my son," said the curé, promptly, his naturally indolent mind receiving impetus from the spirit of the youth, and laying his knife and fork down on his plate with a sigh, he rose and left the room. In a short time he returned, and said—"I have

saddled my own *equus*, or steed, for thee, my son, and sent to a worthy dame, one of my parishioners, to borrow another, a beast, though of less comeliness of form, of equal mettle; him the good woman's son will ride. The boy is but an untamed cub, and will exercise thy patience; nathless, he will conduct thee to the convent of St. Therese, from which place thou wilt obtain another guide to the St. Lawrence."

In the course of half an hour, the lad destined to take the place of Jacques, who, be it here recorded, had feasted sumptuously with the "*coquus*, or cook," came into the room. He was about fifteen years of age, remarkably small in stature, with a snub nose, given to upturning, lively, twinkling, mischievous grey eyes, one of which was marvellously asquint, straight yellow hair, and a red freckled face, the expression of which was mingled intelligence and cunning. His manners were forward, and indicated self-possession above his years. He was rolled up in fur tippets and muffs till he appeared as broad as he was long. He entered the room whisking

his riding-switch about, and without doffing his fur bonnet, which was made of a fox skin, with the brush hanging down his back, in a shrill voice, and with a swaggering air, looking from a corner of his eye at the monk, he addressed the curé. —“ This, then, be the priest, father Duc, I’m to ride with to St. Therese? The devil help me, if he gabble as much Latin as thou, father, there will be but little wit spoken on the road!”

“ Chut st, chut st, Zacharie Nicolet, with thy malapert tongue! thou art but a young pup to bark so fiercely,” cried the curé, forgetting his Latin in his displeasure.

“ And thou art a toothless hound, which can neither bark nor bite,” retorted the lad, with spirit.

“ *Habet salem!* the lad hath the true Attic on his tongue,” said the good-natured curé, whose anger was never very durable, at the same time turning round to the monk, and nodding with a smile of approbation; “ if I could have him aneath my thumb awhile, to teach him the humanities and the golden tongues, he might,

peradventure, do honour to my instructions; as it is, he is, I opine, but game for the gallows."

Zacharie, who did not relish this speech, was about to reply with some pertness, when the monk, fixing upon him his piercing eyes with a steady gaze, until he quailed beneath them, said sternly—"A truce, boy, to this rudeness, and know better the respect due to age. If you are to be my guide to St. Therese, mount and ride; and if that saucy tongue be not more civil on the way, you will find you have to deal with a hound, to use your own figure, which can both bark and bite."

The boy, whose natural acuteness of observation led him to estimate properly the ludicrous points in the character of the simple-minded curé, although incapable of appreciating, at the same time, the excellent qualities of his head and heart, had wit enough to know, from his stern eye and voice, that the stranger was a man of different metal, and that he might, perchance, endanger his personal comfort by presuming to trifle with him. He, therefore, left the room

somewhat crest-fallen, and mounting his horse at the gate, awaited the appearance of the monk, who remained behind to reward the services of the faithful Jacques, bargain with him for the purchase of the furs he had loaned him, and at his request, bestow upon him his parting blessing, confirming with it in full the grant of dispensation for which he had petitioned on the journey.

“Thou’lt see, most worshipful,” said Jacques, stroking his chin, and looking straightforward with a fierce aspect, “when next thou comest our way, how bravely I’ll swear by my beard. I shall not sleep the night for thinking on’t. If Luc Giles don’t take his fish to another market, then call me jack-fool. So good e’en to you, father,” he continued, lifting his bonnet as the monk mounted his horse, “and the saints send ye on the way to the worshipful pope ere he die. It would be an awful circumstance for the great pope to die in his sins!” he added, devoutly crossing himself.

“God assoilzie him!” ejaculated the pious

curé mechanically, without any very definite intelligence whom his prayers were to benefit.

“ Father,” added Jacques, while assisting the traveller to adjust his stirrups, and covering his feet with the fur of his capote, “ keep a tight rein on thy mare, and a tighter one on that Satan’s brat, Zacharie Nicol. If thou wouldst keep him in his place, swear roundly at him by thy beard, or by mine own, an’ thou likest, seeing thine is but young, and he will keep in his proper paces, I’ll warrant me. But, most worshipful,” he added, in a low tone of voice, taking the rein of the monk’s horse as he was about to ride off, “ give not Nick the dispensation for——”

“ What art thou nicking at there in the father’s ear, thou long-eared ass? I’ll switch thy beardless chaps for thee if thou hinder the priest’s journey,” shouted the boy, whose quick ears caught this sacrilegious abbreviation of his name.

The confounded ex-guide immediately released his grasp on the bridle, while the monk, bidding farewell to him and his reverend host, rode briskly forward past his youthful Mercury, who,

before galloping after him, turned his body half round in the saddle, and shook his whip at the curé, crying, in his peculiarly shrill voice—"If thou wilt have a scholar to teach thy Latin to, father Duc, thou hast an ass standing beside thee whom thou mayst teach the tongues, as asses have been taught to speak ere now."

"Profane and thankless *adolescentulus*," ejaculated the curé, looking after the boy for an instant, with mingled astonishment and indignation, "*ita vertere acria ludo*, the which meaneth," he added, turning to the no less shocked Jacques, whom he surveyed closely for an instant, as if the hint of the departing Zacharie had not been altogether lost, and he was estimating his capabilities for receiving the honours which the lad had so unaccountably despised, "which meaneth, my son, the making a jest of sacred things."

"By my beard!" swore Jacques, after the form of his successor had fairly disappeared in a winding of the road, "if I had the limb o' Beelzebub by the nape o' the neck, an' I wouldn't make him think Luc Giles's claws

griped his weasand, may I never more make oath by my beard!"

Thus delivering himself of his indignation, Jacques followed the curé into his dwelling, where we shall, for the present, leave him, either to be duly inducted into the rudiments of the humanities by the learned priest, or into the elements of cookery by the specimen of mother Eve he retained in his household, as the mental or physical propensities of the pupil should predominate.

CHAP. V.

The Storm.

THE traveller and his new guide had not measured three leagues from the hospitable mansion of father Ducosse, before the short day of the season closed. The sun, leaving behind a lurid

glow, went down in a thick bank of clouds, and the general aspect of nature foreboded a storm. The approach of night, however, did not hinder their journey; but moving forward at a round pace, they only stopped to breathe and bait their horses at the infrequent inns along their route, if a lonely peasant's cottage, whose inmates, from hospitality rather than for lucre, received and entertained the few travellers who chanced to pass that way, can be so denominated.

Towards midnight the air became milder, and the stars, which hitherto had lighted them on their way, began to fade gradually from the sky, as a thin white haze spread over it like a veil of gauze. The moon at length rose through a dense atmosphere, and soon after the whole heavens became white with a thick vapour, which totally obscured her disk, but without sensibly increasing the darkness of the night. Dark clouds along the horizon at length began to ascend towards the zenith, and the winds to sigh through the forests. On observing these increasing indications of a gathering tempest, the monk urged forward his horse, and called to his guide, who

lagged behind amusing himself by striking at the branches above his head, to make better speed.

"If you use your whip, Zacharie, on your pony's back, it will be more to the purpose than your present pastime. How far now to the convent St. Therese?" he asked.

"A league and a leap, father. But why dost thou not call me 'son' instead of Zacharie? You holy fathers are ever soning it, as if you'd make up for your own lacking therein, by fathering every beggar's brat in the land. By my mother's honesty, 'tis a wise son knows his own father, when so many holy fathers call him 'son,' and 'my son!'"

"You speak not unadvisedly, Zacharie, and 'tis lest such relationship should be fastened on me, that I omit, in your particular case, this form of speech."

"Thou hast more wisdom than I gave thy cloth credit for, father," replied the boy, at the same time, instigated by his restless spirit, making his horse caricole until he made a demivolt

across the road against the monk, in a manner that would have sent him from his saddle to the ground, if he had been an indifferent horse-man, the catastrophe which was no doubt anticipated by the mischievous urchin.

"So, so, Paul, so, so!" he began, apologetically soothing the animal, "hast thou no better manners than to thrust thy buttocks 'gainst a holy monk? By my grandmother's spectacles, thou shalt suffer purgatory unless thou mend thy manners! Oh, ciel! ouf!" he suddenly cried out with pain, as the monk's riding-whip came in contact with his face; "ai! ah! thou canst use a switch, father, as well as rosary. Malheur! Thou hast made the fire fly out o' the eyes o' me, father," he added, in a tone that had lost a large portion of its assurance, and riding cautiously beyond reach of the monk's whip, "as if they had been flints, and thy switch a steel blade."

"Then husband your tricks to practise on less hasty travellers, Zacharie. Here is salve to anoint your eyes," he added, good-humouredly, and giving him a piece of money.

"Callest thou this salve?" said Zacharie, thrusting the half-crown into his cheek; "if I had eyes over my body as thick as a peacock has on his tail, thou mightest have leave to switch away at them, one at a time, if thou wouldst heal them again with such ointment."

"I believe you, honest Zacharie; for once in your life, I'll be sworn you have spoken truth! But, forward: we must get under cover before this storm comes on. How say you, a league farther?"

"A league from that wheezing rheumatic bridge we crossed ere thou gavest me that ready cut across the blinkers. I tell thee, I like thee better for a blow given in right good-will, when on just provocation, which I will not say thou hadst not, than if thou didst mumble prayers in thy hood for my soul's benefit, as if I were a born heathen, as some monks I've seen would do, or fling hard Latin at my head like father Duc. Were I a man, I would like to try switches with thee, ay, and steel, didst thou carry such ungodly gear beneath thy monk's habit."

“What do you mean, boy?”. inquired the monk, hastily wrapping his gown closer about his person, and riding nearer his guide.

“I mean, father,” replied Zacharie, edging farther off, and shaking his head mysteriously, “that I spied the hilt of a sword, and the gleam of something like pistol-butts, peeping aneath thy gown, when thy fingers were searching for that ointment thou gavest me.”

“Nay, boy, it was but my rosary and silver crucifix you saw,” said the monk, drawing from his bosom and exhibiting, by the faint light, these insignia of his apparent profession; “these are our spiritual sword and pistol, my son, with which we combat the arts of the devil.”

“The devil combat me, then,” said the boy, incredulously, “if I am fool enough to mistake the arms of a brave soldier for those of a craven monk! But thou knowest best, father,” he added, dryly.

For the next five minutes he busily occupied himself in switching the ears of his nag, and appeared to have quite forgotten the subject; and the monk, adopting the wisest course to put to

sleep any suspicion that he might entertain, dangerous either to his safety or the success of his mission, ceased to speak any farther upon it. He determined, however, to watch him closely on his arrival at the convent, lest he might betray the secret of his disguise, for he was convinced that the boy felt satisfied he had not been deceived, although he might pretend to admit the explanation given him.

The atmosphere continued to thicken above their heads, and the night grew sensibly darker every moment. The first approaches of the long-brewing storm were at length manifested by the occasional falling of a crystal of snow, which rapidly increased in size and numbers, till the air was filled with multitudinous flakes, whitening as they fell, their shaggy garments, their horses, the branches of the trees, and the path before them. In a few minutes the surface of the ground was perfectly white, and the wind dying away, the snow fell in a heavy noiseless shower, and soon nearly obliterated all traces of their path. Fearing they should lose it altogether, they galloped forward, and amid a

genuine Canadian snow-storm, which would have rendered it difficult, if not impossible, to proceed much farther through the forest, every vestige of which the snow was momentarily erasing, while it bewildered them by confusing and obscuring every object, they arrived at the place of their destination on the brow of a hill overhanging the river.

The convent of St. Therese, into which we are about to introduce the reader, was a retreat erected by one of the religious communities of the capital, as a place of safety or security during the heat of summer, the prevalence of an epidemic, the dangers of war, or any event which might render a residence in the city insecure or inconvenient. It was, as the travellers discovered on getting close to it, a quadrangular edifice of brick, one story in height, with a single square tower rising from the centre, and surrounded by a low brick wall, enclosing a lawn ornamented with forest trees. It was situated on the summit of a cliff rising boldly from the river, and at the southern extremity of a gorge a mile in length, through which, at a

profound depth, the river furiously raged over a rocky bed. Opposite the convent, separated from it by the river, rose lofty hills covered with forests, with the jagged face of a rock protruding here and there from their sides. This site was chosen rather for the romantic features of the surrounding scenery, than for its capabilities of defence, in case of hostile attack; yet difficult of access, and commanding the only road leading through the defile, it was equally suited either for a religious retirement, or a military fortress. The monastic community was composed, at the time of our traveller's visit, of four or five *religieuses professées*, several novices, the lady superior, and a father confessor.

"Here, father," said Zacharie, as they drew up their weary horses before a gate placed in the wall surrounding the convent, "here thou'lt find those that wear the gown as well as thou, and carry sharper weapons than that crucifix thou tellest of."

"How mean you, sir Wisdom?" carelessly asked the monk, dismounting as he spoke, and lifting a heavy knocker, which he applied seve-

ral times loudly to the solid panel of the gate to which it was affixed.

“Dost not know then? but how shouldst thou know what I mean, being a monk,” said the boy, with a touch of irony in his voice. “I speak of the *demoiselles*, whose tongues and eyes are sharper than the two-edged sword father Duc preaches about. Ciel! if thou couldst hear my old dam’s clapper go at times, thou wouldst say, ne’er convent bell rung louder, or sword cut sharper. Mercie! I never see a petticoat but I plug my ears. Hearest thou not their chattering even now? That knocker in thy hand has set them to cawing, as I’ve heard a roost of crows when I chanced to send a rook among them.”

“Hush, boy, your tongue would outwoman them all!” said the monk; then grasping his arm, as he stood beside him near the gate, he added, sternly—“While within these walls, if wise, you will keep your tongue closely within your teeth, or you will feel a heavier weight than that of my riding-switch.” As he spoke, a light appeared in a window of the convent, and

an individual, thrusting his head forth, desired to know who disturbed the repose of the inmates at an hour so untimely.

“ A black sheep o’ thine own flock, father Bonaventure,” shouted Zacharie, in reply, adding in a lower voice, “ but I think he be a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

“ Boy,” said the monk, in a decided tone, “ I perceive you are aware that I am not what I seem. Beneath your assumed levity you have a sufficient share of good sense, which now may be of service to you. I have here, as you rightly guessed,” he continued, placing his hand on his sword, “ what will at once release me from all fear of betrayal. But do not start back. You have no cause for alarm : I shall not harm a hair of your head. I will do better—trust to your generosity for preserving the secret you possess ! Have I mistaken my man ?” he added, in a tone of frank and manly confidence, which, with his language, made its intended impression on Zacharie, who, with his reckless and mischievous nature, possessed a generous spirit and certain inborn sentiments of honour, rude though they

were, and hidden under a heedless exterior, often allied to such wild and dauntless characters as his; and the attitude assumed by the monk at this crisis, not only furnished a proof of his knowledge of human nature, but did honour to his heart.

“ No, thou hast not mistaken me,” replied the boy, firmly, and with a respectful courtesy in his voice and manner that surprised the monk; and then adding, in something like his usual manner, “ be thou priest or soldier, monk or devil, I would not now betray thee. None shall know from me thou art other than a mumbling friar, with a beard a full yard long, hollow eyes, bony cheeks, and withered to a ’natomy. That thou carriest only rosary and crucifix, I will take my gospel oath. Father Duc,” he continued, in his usual manner, “ should have trusted me; but he thinks me either a fool or a knave, or both; but, for that matter, I never had but little reputation for aught except evil. Thou art the first man that ever saw in me other than the horned devil himself. How thou shouldst know me in one night’s ride better than the old wo-

men, priests, and habitants, I've lived with all my life, is odd enough. But thou hast not misplaced thy confidence; and, for treating me like a reasonable being, as thou hast done, instead of doing thee an injury, I would fight for thee against my mother. But one thing I will frankly tell thee, father," he said, in a low tone, as a man with a lantern crossed the lawn to the gate, "that if thou hadst not placed this confidence in me, but had sought by threats and offers of violence to insure my secrecy, then thou shouldst have swung for it after, if, as I believe, thou art a spy."

"Is it a brother who craves our hospitality this wintry night?" asked, in a sonorous drawling voice, a corpulent person, in cowl and gown hastily thrown on awry, peering as he spoke between the bars of the gate, and thrusting the lamp through the interstices to his elbow, to examine the travellers more nearly, although their persons, wrapped in furs and whitened with a thick coat of the still-falling snow, were scarcely distinguishable, and resembled to the vision of the fat priest, shaggy polar bears

standing upright on their hind legs as much as men.

Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he began with great deliberation to unlock and disengage the padlock from the bars which crossed and firmly secured the double leaves of the gate, and admitted the travellers and their horses. After closing the gate, he conducted the latter to a range of brick stalls standing not far from it; and then leaving Zacharie to attend to the comfort of the animals, he led the way, with a sort of limping gait, across the court to the door of the convent.—“The snow hath somewhat mollified the air, brother,” he said, as they arrived at the door, “yet a warm brand may not be amiss; so I bade sister Agathe, as I came forth to admit thee, to rake open the embers in the refectory; thither I will lead thee. Crooked sticks make even fire; therefore will sister Agathe’s labours soon expel the cold from thy limbs.”

So saying, he preceded the traveller through the door, and entered a narrow passage, turning abruptly to the left; at the opposite extremity was an open door, through which they passed

into a large apartment totally dark.—“ When the candles are out all cats are grey,” said the confessor, punching his guest familiarly in the ribs.

At the farther end of the room was a huge fire-place, in which, upon a pile of smoking wood, lay a few coals, the glare of which, as they were at intervals blown up by the asthmatic breath of an aged female, who, with a religious habit flung in rude dishabille over her shoulders, was on her hands and knees before it, served, in conjunction with the faint light of the lantern held by the host, to increase the cheerless gloom of the large apartment, instead of dissipating the darkness.

“ Sister Agathe,” said the priest, or father confessor, as more correctly he should be denominated, “ thou hast but a cold fire for cold travellers.”

“ Rome was not built in a day,” growled the old crone.

“ Neither,” he added, with some severity, “ now that I view thee more closely, is thy attire becoming the presence of strangers. Hie

thee to thy cell, woman, and complete thy toilet, and then see that couches are prepared in the guest's lodge. I myself will take thy place at the hearth."

"Let not thy tongue cut thy throat," retorted the woman, with asperity, as she shuffled out of the room.

"A fool's bolt is soon shot," rejoined father Bonaventure, as she departed.

A bright blaze soon rewarded him for the unusual and lavish expenditure of wind from his capacious lungs. After the traveller and Zacharie, who had returned from the stable, and was fast asleep on the hearth, had sufficiently partaken of its genial heat, the former proceeded to make known his errand to his host.

"You are, worthy father," he said, suddenly turning, and bending his eyes full upon him, "a good Catholic, and have the welfare of church and state at heart, I trust?"

"Heaven forbid it should be otherwise, brother," answered the priest with quickness, suspiciously eying his guest from the corner of one eye as he sat beside him. Then crossing his

fat hands over his puncheon-like person, while he twirled his thumbs, as if perplexed at the question, he asked—"Why, why puttest thou such a query to me, brother?"

"Are you well affected towards the present government, father?" interrogated the monk, without appearing to regard his question.

Father Bonaventure hitched his person along the bench, and eyed the monk from head to feet, as if he expected to see horns, or a hoof at the very least, while his features were agitated by a complex expression of mingled distrust and confidence. The former sentiment at length predominated, and with a voice and manner, partly the effect of his fears and suspicions, and partly assumed as a feeler to fathom the purpose of his interrogator without politically committing himself, he said—"Avoid thee, Sathanas! wouldst thou ensnare me to my own hurt?"

"Not so, father," replied the monk, smiling, and at once comprehending the ruse. "I am the bearer of weighty news from father Etienne, whom I left last night; his name should be a

key to confidence between us. I touched your pulse with a question or two, good father, for my own private satisfaction, before I opened my business."

"Verily, thou didst somewhat alarm me," replied father Bonaventure, drawing a long breath, as if a great weight had suddenly fallen from his breast; "I thought thee an inquisitor of government, and, as I have been of late somewhat given to insurgent speech and opinions, I feared the worst; yea, verily, 'the guilty fleeth when no man pursueth.' Thou bearest with thee, brother, doubtless, some writing or token that I may confer with thee in safety touching the matter which thou wouldst open to me?"

"I do. It is—the chevalier De Levi!"

"Then thou art doubly welcome," said father Bonaventure, moving back to his former place near his guest, and warmly grasping his hand. All distrust instantly disappeared from his jocund physiognomy, and was replaced by an air of profound mystery, nowise diminished by the significant application, as he looked at his guest,

of the fore finger of his left hand to the side of a nose of the most formidable dimensions.

After a long conference in relation to the expected invasion, the monk, not having thought it prudent to undeceive his host in the opinion he entertained of his sacerdotal character, was conducted by him to a comfortable and well-furnished cell in a distant part of the convent. On taking leave of him for the night, and commending him to the protection of St. Therese, the father assured him that he should be furnished in the morning with a guide and a carriage, for the snow would render such a mode of travelling necessary, to convey him to the St. Lawrence.

CHAP. VI.

The Matins.

THE ensuing morning our traveller was roused from his short repose by the loud tolling of the convent bell for matins, and the voice of father Bonaventure at the outside of the door of his dormitory.—“Wilt thou not up to morning prayer, brother? I will attend thee to our little oratory, where we are wont to commence the duties of the day with orisons.”

“I thank you, brother, for so carefully watching over my spiritual welfare,” replied the monk, rising from the bed on which he had thrown himself, without laying aside his disguise, and opening the door. “I have had brief time for sleep; yet two or three hours snatched from the twenty-four is enough for youth, though

hardly sufficient for age like yours. I fear I broke in somewhat roughly on your repose last night."

"Not a whit, not a whit, brother. It is not wise to wake a sleeping lion, saith the old proverb, but the contrary may perchance be true of a sleeping friar—hey, brother?" said the confessor, chuckling at his own happy conceit, and glancing at his guest for applause, rubbing the while his hands together to keep them warm by the friction.

"I will, nevertheless, try and atone for my intrusion in some degree by making a speedy departure," observed the monk.

"Not so, good brother, not so; I would have thee abide here as long as it may suit thy convenience; thy companionship will be most welcome. It is ill biding alone among woman-kind—to hold colloquy with poor silly creatures like sister Agathe, on whose dull senses wise words are cast away, like the throwing of goodly pearls before swine; and, moreover, she is deaf as a *mosquenonge*."

"Is sister Agathe the only companion of your

solitude, brother?" inquired the monk, in an indifferent tone, of father Bonaventure, as he slowly led the way through the gallery, his locomotion somewhat retarded by the spherical honours of his outward man, and a gouty halt in his left leg.

"Marry is she not!" he replied, looking back over his shoulder, his portly dimensions not permitting his guest to walk beside him in the passage. "First there is the superior (between us, brother, she would be more properly denominated the 'inferior'), whose physiognomy is compounded of a squint and a twisted nose, and, moreover, she suffereth under that curse to the sex, red hair: these attractions keeping lovers at a proper distance, drove her at the discreet age of thirty-five to take the veil; verily, a wise covering for such a frontispiece."

"And does this tempting specimen of the sex comprise, with sister Agathe, all your household, brother?" asked the monk, gravely.

"By St. Therese, no, good brother! There are some half dozen religieuses who are full of the odour of sanctity, dried and withered from prayer and fasting; hang them up in the wind,

and it would whistle an *ave* through their bones; the very floor creaks *credo* when they move across it. A mouse might wear their consciences in his breast, and not sin. Yet, saints ha' mercy, brother! for want of sins to confess—for the kind must ever be chattering—they puzzle their brains to conjure up vain imaginings, and din half-hatched iniquities into mine ears. I believe they would all turn murderers and robbers to have one good round sin to bring up to confession."

"Truly, you have a trying time of it, brother," replied the monk in a sympathizing tone, as father Bonaventure paused to take breath, and draw a long sigh of pitiable distress, as he poured his griefs into a brother's willing ear; "your circumstances call for the virtue of patience."

"Assuredly do they, brother," said father Bonaventure, stopping full at the door of the chapel, and taking his guest by the sleeve, "assuredly do they! There is sister Ursule, as straight, thin, fleshless an anatomy, as the breath of life ever flitted about in, comes to me with a

holy smile that would turn a mug of new ale to vinegar, and says, forsooth, she must confess to me under seal, having sinned to her soul's damage, and the church's scandal. And what think you," he continued, with the air of a man seriously and grievously distressed, at the same time looking his guest full in the eyes with a serio-comic expression, "what think you, brother, this great iniquity proved to be after all?"

"I cannot well guess," replied the monk, surveying with a smile the fat round bulk of the confessor, "unless it were, that the frail Ursule cast forbidden glances on your goodly person."

"Verily, thou hast guessed it, shrewd brother; but Heaven be thanked, Dan Cupid had no finger in her holy thoughts!" he devoutly ejaculated. "When I urged her to unburden her conscience, she says to me, with much sighing and whispering, 'Reverend father, while I chanced to elevate my eyes at vespers, they fell upon thy reverend whiskers,' (here father Bonaventure complacently stroked these not altogether uncomely appendages to his cheeks),

‘ and tempted by the devil, I bethought me, in the midst of a paternoster, if holy and youthful St. Timothy’s sacred cheeks had whiskers for adornment like thine own.’ *Miséricorde!*” added the father, fetching a deep suspiration, between a sigh and a groan, as he opened the door of the chapel and ushered in his guest, “ these women will be my death. One good round sin of a godless freebooter were better worth listening to the confession of, than all the milk-and-water peccadilloes of a regiment of pale-eyed religieuses, such as daily weary out my soul, and wear the flesh from my poor bones.”

“ Of a truth, you have kept the good wine until now, good brother Bonaventure,” whispered the monk, as his eyes at that moment encountered a bevy of novices, one or two with their veils perhaps drawn artfully aside, and their lovely features eloquent with curiosity, as their glances were directed towards the opening door, kneeling around the altar of the oratory.

“ Callest thou that good wine ?” responded father Bonaventure, interrogatively, and in the same low tone of voice, following the direction

of the monk's eyes with his own, " thou art no judge of grapes, brother. Marry come up! they are every soul possessed with a born devil, and give me more disquiet than so many bear-cubs turned loose within the convent walls. Alas! I fear they are given over to the power of the prince of darkness, for their hearts are prone to mischief as the sparks fly upward. If thou wilt in part ease me of my burden, brother, and after prayers take upon thyself the confession of the tamest of them, demure as they now look, thou wilt soon be wearied body and soul with them, and be ready to open window, and bid them fly with God's blessing, and leave thee to collect thy wits together in peace, as ere now I have prayed them to do. Good wine, is't? The ass that carries the wine drinks but water."

Thus speaking, the reverend father confessor, whose constitutional indolence, combined with the active consciences of his charges, left him, according to his own relation of his grievances, little leisure to attend to the thrift of his own body or soul, and peace neither to the one nor

the other, but who, nevertheless, went good-naturedly grumbling through life, advanced with a slow pace to the altar, mumbling, as he passed them, a morning salutation to the devotees, and opened the service of the hour.

The oratory or chapel within which the monk was introduced constituted the basement story of the tower, the diameter of whose area was about eighteen feet. The ceiling, which overhead was raised several feet higher than the sides of the oratory, was overspread with a covering of crimson silk, radiating from a silver star in the centre of the dome in folds or plaits, like an immense circular fan: extending on every side to the extremities of the room, it fell in hangings, bordered with deep fringes, to the floor, concealing the brick sides of the tower, and presenting altogether the novelty of a silken pavilion within the walls of a convent, a unique and costly tabernacle, illustrating, even in this rural retreat, that taste and lavish expence characteristic of Roman Catholics in all ages and in all countries.

At the left of the door by which father Bonaventure and his guest entered stood a small altar of black marble, surmounted by a white slab of the same material; several candles burned upon it, and in the midst of them was a crucifix, the cross only a few inches in height, but of massive silver, and the effigy of the Redeemer, of fine gold. On the right of the altar stood a mahogany confessional box, and on the left a low pulpit, from which the father confessor occasionally pronounced homilies to his little congregation. Before the altar, awaiting the commencement of the morning service, kneeled, in two semicircles, the females composing his limited audience. Those who kneeled nearest to the sanctuary were evidently the religieuses, sisters, in age and tenderness of conscience, to the sister Ursule. The second row, and that farthest from the chancel, evidently consisted of that branch of father Bonaventure's flock, which, in his opinion, were given over to the delusions of sin.

They were seven in number, mystic emblems, no doubt, of the Pleiades, at least so thought

the youthful monk; and fourteen bright eyes glanced round and rested upon him as he followed father Bonaventure into the oratory, for the presence of a stranger in the convent was not of such frequent occurrence as to render the curiosity of females living so retired from the world either torpid or indifferent. In its gratification in this instance, however, they received a check from the eye and voice of a middle-aged female, with a sour visage, kneeling a little in advance of them, whose physiognomical details answered so closely to the worthy father Bonaventure's vivid description of the lady superior, that the stranger was at no loss in fixing her identity.

The oratory had no aperture for admitting the light from without, and, except when the candles were burning during morning and evening service, or the performance of mass on saints' days, it remained, save the partial illumination of a solitary taper burning in a chased vessel of oil set before the crucifix, in a state perfectly dark. Father Bonaventure commenced the usual service of the morning with habitual readi-

ness and indifference, hurrying through it as if anxious to bring it to a speedy termination; while the monk, who had declined his invitation to assist him on the plea of fatigue, kneeled reverently by the chancel, and, as it happened, on account of the small dimensions of the area before the altar, near the line of novices.

During the prayers, his attention was drawn to the remarkably sweet and musical voice of the novice nearest to him, as she repeated, in a low tone, the customary prayers and portions of the service. Instigated by curiosity to see the lips from which such melodious accents flowed, and behold the features of one whom his youthful and romantic admiration already assured him must be surpassingly fair, he put back his cowl, and partly turned his face to glance beneath her veil. The movement, gentle as it was, attracted her notice, and produced a corresponding change of her own attitude, and their eyes met.

For an instant, as if fascinated, her gaze rested full upon his dark expressive eyes, which became softened and subdued, as such eyes are wont to be when they encounter the glance of

youth and beauty; at the same time, they beamed with that ardent and passionate admiration which the vanity of a beautiful woman will not allow her to misconstrue. For a moment, and for a moment only, she forgot the nun in the woman. A blush instantly suffused her cheeks, and bending her head in confusion, she hastily veiled a face which he, nevertheless, had time to see was eminently lovely; and then resumed, with a gentle suspiration which did not escape his ear, and with renewed earnestness, her momentarily-forgotten devotions.

In a few minutes afterward the services of the morning closed, and both novices and religiouses rising from the altar, followed in slow procession the stern superior, who deigned to cast a glance neither upon the father confessor nor the monk, and disappeared through a door hitherto concealed behind the arras, and opposite to that by which father Bonaventure and his guest had entered.

“Take thou the chair of confessional, brother,” said father Bonaventure, breathing freely, like a man relieved by the termination of irk-

some duties, as his flock were leaving the chapel; "the greatest sinner of them all will soon be back, if for no better purpose, at least to have an opportunity of using her tongue, shallow waters being, as thou knowest, always the most noisy."

As the last novice left the chapel, she did not fail, before dropping the folds of the tapestry from her hand, to cast a timid glance towards the stranger, whose piercing eyes had so dangerously encountered her own, no less brilliant and piercing, but tempered with the softness of the gazelle's.

"Time presses, worthy brother," replied the monk, turning away his lingering gaze from the spot where the graceful figure of the novice had disappeared, and fixing it upon the very different figure of father Bonaventure, "and I may not delay a longer space than it will consume to prepare some mode of conveyance. I will break my fast with you, and then leave your hospitable roof."

"It will be difficult journeying, brother," replied the priest; "thou hast not looked forth

this morning. Come with me, though the ascent be somewhat precipitous, and I will show thee the road thou must travel, and, peradventure, when thou seest its condition, thou wilt doubtless think it an argument in favour of sojourning with me for a yet longer space. Follow, brother; the penitents may await our return; 'twill teach them patience. Patience, saith the proverb, is a good plaster."

Thus speaking, he raised the hangings, and led the way through a passage between them and the bare walls to a small staircase that wound spirally to the summit of the tower.

The father Bonaventure caused his guest to mount the steps in advance, while step after step, slowly and laboriously, he followed him towards the top.—"Fair and softly, fair and softly, good brother," he said, as his guest began to ascend with a light step, "hasty climbers get sudden falls. The more haste the worse speed, saith the proverb. No human abode should be more than one story above ground."

At length the monk emerged from the dark stairway upon a small rectangle a few feet square,

so completely monopolized by a bell, with its wheel, axle, and other apparatus, that there was left but little room for him, and none for the capacious dimensions of father Bonaventure; he was content to remain at the head of the stairs, with his head thrust through the trap-door, while his guest looked forth from the latticed window, which extended quite around the belfry.

“ Will you not come up, brother ? ” archly inquired the monk of his host, whose round face was thrust up through the aperture ; “ without your aid I cannot profit by my elevated station.”

“ I need not, I need not, brother,” answered father Bonaventure, retaining his position, and still breathing heavily : “ look forth, and thou canst see what I would point out to thee—three good feet of November snow on the earth, and the road thou art to travel about as plain as the path left by a boat on the water. Hugh ! this coming up stairs is dreadful. I am of opinion, brother, that man was not physically constituted to go up hill or up stairs. The effort that

nature makes at such times to sustain the forced exertion of the muscles proves clearly that it is unnatural. Stairs are the devil's own invention. But what seest thou? Art satisfied that thou wilt have to be my guest yet a while longer?"

As the monk looked forth from the window the sun was just rising in cloudless radiance, but there was no warmth in his beams. The prospect he surveyed was strikingly different from that which he contemplated when first introduced to the reader, gazing down, from an overhanging hill, into the lovely valley of the Chaudiere. The face of the earth was now totally changed; the green mantle of summer, and the graver robe of autumn had given way to the winding-sheet that winter had thrown over the dying year; a stratum of snow lay deep in the glen, whitening the leafless forests, and enveloping the frozen river as if it had lain upon the solid earth; not a trace of the path he had travelled the night previous, except where the absence of trees might indicate its direction, was visible to his eye; in one short night

winter had laid field, forest, and river, under the dominion of his hoary sceptre. Not a bird broke the silence of the morning; the flocks and herds were safely housed; and save a hare bounding lightly over the snow, or a little flock of sparrows flitting upon its surface, not a quadruped, or a loiterer of the feathered tribe, and not a human being or living creature, was visible throughout the whole scope of his vision—stern desolation alone reigned over the inhospitable scene.

“How great the change! how infinite the contrast of the present scene,” said the monk, mentally, “with that I beheld but yesterday! The glory of the summer forests, the golden harvest-field, the lowing of the kine, and the song of the happy peasant, all have departed——”

“Brother,” said father Bonaventure, interrupting his train of thought, “thou seest, doubtless, what comfort awaits thee abroad. That snow lies two feet deep on the ground if it lay an inch. Neither *burlins*, *traineau*, nor *carriole* can move the length of a rosary, till the

road is somewhat broken up by heavy sleds, and the sun settles the snow."

"But I can take horse, brother, as I came," said the monk, in a confident tone.

"Thou couldst not travel a mile an hour on horseback through such snow—thou wouldst do better to take to snow-shoes."

"That I will do, if there is no other alternative," persevered the guest, "for forward I must, let the difficulties be what they may. If the road is to be broken, some one must be the first to break it, and why not I as well as another? If it is passable for one man, it also is for me. Look you, brother," he added, hastily, "come a step higher, and bend your eyes through the lower part of the lattice, and tell me what you see."

The father confessor raised himself till his eyes were on a level with the lower crevice of the window, and looked in the direction indicated by his guest.

"Speak, brother, what do you discern?" asked the monk, exultingly.

"By St. Therese! I spy three, nay, four men

on horseback far down the glen," replied the father, looking into the face of his guest with something like surprise visible in his features.

"Do I see rightly, brother?"

"You see rightly," replied the monk; "four mounted men, half a league off, are travelling thither through the snow, the difficulties of which your hospitality, brother, has led you to magnify somewhat; they seem to travel at a good round pace nevertheless: this is fortunate; if they pass by, and continue on farther, I shall have my road broken before me. 'Tis a special interposition of Heaven, brother—dost not think so?" he added, pleasantly.

"By St. Therese, 'tis a miracle!" answered father Bonaventure, in a disappointed tone, "but a miracle of Beelzebub's own making. Here I thought to keep thee at least till to-morrow or the day after. Well, God makes and the tailor shapes. 'Tis an ill wind blows nobody good. 'Tis folly to fret when grief's no comfort," and thus comforting himself with proverbs, father Bonaventure prepared to descend the stairs of the tower.

"Beware, brother," said the monk, as father Bonaventure's bald crown slowly disappeared through the scuttle; "*facilis descensus Averni*, as worthy brother Ducosse would have it, not that I would intimate that your oratory is the Avernus to which Maro alludes."

"Maro Virgilius was a heathen," said the confessor, as he carefully descended the stairs, perfectly assuring himself of the safety of one foot before he put down the other, progressing something as we have seen children three years old when performing the same feat. "I marvel much brother Ducosse should be so given to quoting heathenish sayings; he endangereth thereby his soul's well-being. But, brother, if thou wilt travel after I have shown thee the road, why then go, and the saints be with thee. 'Tis hard to make a wild goose lay a tame egg. Youth is ever more hasty than wise, and a little pot is soon hot. Go thou into the confessional," he added, as they reached the door of the chapel; "two mornings in the week do the sisters confess, and this is one of them; while thou art shriving the penitents, I will be making prepa-

rations for thy departure. Heaven send thee patience this morning, brother, for verily thou wilt need it. But methinks thou art somewhat young to be made a father confessor; but what sayeth the proverb—'tis not the cowl that makes the friar, nor the cap that makes the cardinal." Thus speaking, the oracular father Bonaventure drew aside the hangings, and thrusting the monk in, said—"Go in, and, by St. Therese, make clean hearts o' them! new brooms sweep clean." Then hobbling away with his usual rolling gait, which the monk, as he followed him with his eyes, thought resembled more the waddling of a duck than the walk of a reverend priest, he disappeared through a door opening from the gallery, while the new confessor, putting aside the arras, found himself once more within the dimly-lighted chapel.

CHAP. VII.

The Confessor.

entering the chapel, the monk paused a moment to contemplate the circumstances in which he was so unexpectedly placed by the request of father Bonaventure. In his first interview he had not undeceived him respecting his ostensible clerical character. When the proposal of confiding in the confessional closet in his stead was made by the father on their way into the chapel, he had resolved, if further urged upon the subject, which he did not anticipate, to escape by some subterfuge, or, if it should become necessary, disclose his disguise; but the lovely power of the oratory acting upon a highly romantic imagination and feelings sufficiently susceptible, at once, with the potency of a magician's

wand, overthrew his well-formed resolutions, which had originated in a species of chivalric honour, and a certain reverence for religion, and he determined to play the father confessor for a time if again solicited, trusting that his good fortune might place him once more within the influence of those brilliant eyes whose glances had penetrated his heart, and in the hearing of that sweet voice whose accents had captivated his senses ; nevertheless, when he found himself alone within the chapel, where no thoughts should have intruded, save those that had the Supreme Being for their object, its dim religious light, the solemn pomp of the altar, the sacred vessels dedicated to the worship of the Creator, the touching image of Him who “ bowed his head and died,” and the deep silence, like that of a tomb, all conspired to impress his mind with the awful character of the place, and send the blood with guilty violence to his brow. With a quick pulse and a conscious feeling of guilt, he hesitated to proceed to the extent proposed by the father confessor, and for a moment trembled at his own daring impiety, and at the thought

of so sacrilegious an assumption of holy duties. His step faltered, and he was half persuaded to turn back ; but while he lingered with his hand upon the silken curtain before the door by which he had entered, a slight motion of the hangings opposite at the place where the lovely novice had disappeared, terminated his indecision. Dropping the curtain, he said abruptly, as if he would effectually silence the troublesome monitor within—" 'Tis a masquerade and mummery all, so I'll in and take the chances Cupid sends me !" and crossing the space before the altar, he hastily entered the confessional, and closed the door.

He had scarcely concealed himself, when the arras was drawn aside, and a veiled female entered the chapel. After sanctifying her brow with the holy water that stood in a vase by the entrance, with a readiness which appeared the result of habit, she approached the confessional box, not omitting an additional sign of the cross upon her bosom, as she glided past the crucifix, and silently kneeled on the low step beneath

its lattice. A solitary lamp, that burned night and day, the emblem of that "light which has come into the world to save sinners," shed its pale rays through the chapel, rendering remote objects, and the form of the penitent, dim and indistinct.

"Father, thy blessing!" she said, in a low monotonous voice, but as unlike that of the youthful novice, thought the disappointed confessor, as the croaking of the penfrog to the melody of the nightingale.

By a train of reasoning not unfrequently employed by young men in the affairs of the heart, the young soldier had jumped to a conclusion, for which, without sounder premises, the logic of the schools could have given him no authority, which was, that the first and only penitent must be the dark-eyed novice. His present disappointment was therefore proportionate to his confidence in the soundness of his reasoning, wherein his hopes outweighed probability; more especially as the novice, unless some bird had carried it to her ear, or she had learned it by that refinement of instinct which the female

heart in such cases wonderfully exhibits, could not have been aware of this very desirable change of father confessors. He nevertheless determined to abide by his present fate, and out-general dame Fortune, by resorting to his own wits for improving the aspect of affairs. He therefore, in a voice disguised to imitate, so far as possible, the burlesque grunts of father Bonaventure, in which he was materially aided by the close sides of the confessional, replied to the kneeling penitent—"Thou hast my blessing, daughter. Relieve thy soul, and briefly. A short horse is soon curried; a short shrift and a long fast. Say on."

"I have grievously sinned, father, both in thought and deed," said the penitent, plaintively, sighing as if her heartstrings would give way, and then pausing to await the effect of her words upon her confessor.

"Confess first thy sin of thought, daughter," he said, in an encouraging tone of voice.

"Yester eve," began the penitent, readily,

as if happy at the opportunity of using her tongue, arranging her veil, and settling herself more easily in her kneeling posture, “yester eve, when novice Eugenie was threading my needle (for I was working at the broidery, for the covering to thy *escritoir*, father), she said—for thou knowest, father, these young novices lately come from Quebec, are not discreet and maidenly in their deportment, as, without mentioning my sinful and unworthy self, those who have been a somewhat longer space of time wedded to holy church—well, as I was saying, father, these young girls are full of all manner of iniquitous thoughts, and their vain hearts follow after the devices of their evil imaginations continually; and,” added she, raising her hands in holy horror, “they think about men, father! not such as thyself, who art as harmless as a dove, and whom I pray the Virgin will protect; for, alas! if thou shouldst be taken from us——”

“Thy sin! thy sin of thought, daughter!” interrupted the impatient confessor, as his penitent began to lose sight of her own sins in her horror at those of others, and in her solicitude

for her confessor; "this worldly-minded novice, Eugenie—what has she to do with thy sins, or thee?"

"As I was saying, father, novice Eugenie, worldly-minded, as thou justly sayst, was threading my needle for the broidery, for thou knowst thy *escritoir*—"

"I know, I know, daughter; keep to thy confession," interrupted the monk, in his impatience with difficulty disguising his voice; "this novice! what said she?"

"She said, father—it's a sin to repeat it, for I blush even to think of it—she said, and so loud too, that old Agathe, who was sweeping the room, could have heard her if she hadn't been deaf, that she wished that thou—even thyself, holy father, wert a youthful knight in disguise. No wonder you start, father; the saints preserve us! was such like ever heard of? May St. Therese guard her household is my prayer!" she concluded, devoutly crossing herself.

"Amen!" responded the confessor, in a voice that appeared to have come from the very bot-

tom of father Bonaventure's chest. "What said she further, daughter?"

"As I was saying, father, when you interrupted me," glibly continued the religieuse, "she said she wished you were a disguised knight, like a certain brave young Norman warrior, sir Walter De Lancy by name, whom she says she once read of in a sinful romaunt. This comes of reading godless romances, father; thank the Virgin, I can say I never committed that sin! She said this Walter De Lancy loved a novice—no doubt just such a pert, graceless thing as this Eugenie—and for love of her, got himself admitted into the convent, disguised as the holy father confessor, whom he shut up in a tower in his own castle till he had told the silly novice he loved her, and prevailed on her to run away with him and marry him, as I have no doubt, and I would say it on the cross, that novice Eugenie herself would do, if she could have the opportunity. Was ever such scandal heard of, father, as this deed of that godless Norman knight?"

"Impious and daring youth! He is now, no

doubt, doing penance in purgatory for a crime so unparalleled," replied the monk, in a severe tone of voice.

"I trust he is, father; such sacrilegious conduct should be punished as an example," responded the penitent, with that tempered exultation which became humility; "but then, what think you this novice Eugenie said, father? Well, she said she wished that Norman knight was alive now, and would come into the convent in disguise, and confess the household instead of you. The minx! no doubt, in that case, she thinks she'd be the novice. But if thou wert the Norman, father, thou wouldst know better," she continued, in tones meant to be very insinuating, "than to be taken with such silly, and withal, sinful children as these novices are—that thou wouldst."

"Thou sayst well, daughter," replied the confessor, in a tone of voice modelled on her own; "if I were that sacrilegious Norman of whom thou speakst—"

"Not I, father, not I! the novice Eugenie," she said, hastily.

"Well, the novice Eugenie: if I were him of whom she speaks, I should make choice of one more discreet and experienced; one, I think, of about thy own age, daughter."

"I knew thou wouldst, father," she said, triumphantly. "But was't not a great sin for this novice to listen to this Norman?"

"Verily was it, daughter," answered the monk, solemnly; "and she is, no doubt, enduring at this moment painful penance with him in purgatory."

"With him, father? that can be no penance if they are together," she said, in a tone of disapprobation.

"In purgatory they neither know nor are known, my daughter," said the monk, mildly. "Now proceed in thy confession. A willing mind makes a light heel."

"When novice Eugenie said she wished you were the handsome young Norman knight, I said, father," here the voice of the penitent was lowered to a very confidential key, while her lips approached rather closer to the lattice than was customary, "that I thought thee young

and handsome enough as thou wert, and I, for one, would rather have father Bonaventure for my lover than the comeliest knight, be he Norman or whoever he be, that ever broke lance."

Here a deep sigh, partaking, as the monk thought, equally of the penitential and of the amorous, concluded the first division, or the sin in thought, of the penitent's confession.

" Sister Ursule, for, though I behold not thy face, such thy words bespeak thee to be," said the monk, shooting a random, but, as the result showed, a successful arrow, " although thy sin is great, in as much as thou hast suffered thy thoughts to wander to my poor person instead of confining them to thy crucifix, nevertheless, it may be atoned for by a penance commensurate with its enormity. I enjoin, therefore, upon thee six additional paternosters, and twelve ave marias over and above thy customary devotions; and, moreover, that thou come not to confession for a week to come, and never, by word or look, put me again in re-

membrance of this morning's confession. Now relate thy sin in deed, daughter."

"Alas, reverend father," sighed the penitent religieuse, "how can I utter my own shame! This morning, while at mass, I lifted my eyes and gazed for at least ten seconds on the face of the holy monk at present sojourning in the convent."

"*Thou, woman!*" exclaimed the monk, thrown off his guard by surprise and chagrin, while the penitent recoiled from the lattice with an incipient scream of alarm. He immediately, however, recovered his presence of mind, which had suddenly deserted him at the bare possibility of the identity of the ancient religieuse Ursule with the lovely novice of the oratory, whose features he had indistinctly seen, and whose voice he had but once heard; but a moment's reflection convinced him of the absurdity of such a supposition, and in the gruffest tones of father. Bonaventure he said—"The enormity of thy offence, daughter, hath moved me even to the giving utterance to my indignation in a strange tongue, as did the saints

of old, as thou hast heard me expound to thee from scripture. But wherefore didst thou let thy thoughts—nay, thy eyes, lead thee into sin?"

"It was, father," replied the penitent, who had resumed her original attitude at the lattice, in an apologetic tone, "solely for the good of novice Eugenie, knowing her thoughts are ever worldward. Somehow, when the strange monk kneeled so close beside her, I could not get the Norman knight out of my head, and so I naturally looked at him, and then I looked at her, and all at once, father, I saw them both turn and look at each other, and I never saw holy man look so pitifully as he looked on her bold face, as if he knew her failing. I was glad to see she had the grace to veil her head, though I had not given her credit for so much discretion. Forsooth," she added, with a toss of her head, "I shouldn't wonder if the forward chit thought it was the bold Norman knight she is ever talking about, since that godless romaunt fell into her hands, who had come and kneeled himself down beside her, as if he would look at

such a silly child, when there were others to pick and choose from."

"Thou sayst well, daughter," said the confessor; "and now, in regard to this second offence of thine, which thou hast done wisely to confess so readily, I enjoin thee, first, to keep all the religieuses in their rooms, and also, all the novices, save the novice Eugenie, for one hour to come. Eugenie I command you to send forthwith to take thy place at the confessional, for she hath merited not only penance, but a severe reprimand, having not only sinned herself, but tempted thee, holy sister, to commit sin, both in thought, word, and deed. But thou art released from thine offences on the performance of the slight penances I have enjoined upon thee. Benedicite, daughter! Go send the novice Eugenie into the oratory."

The religieuse Ursule rose from her knees, her heart lightened of a heavy burden by this free confession of her great sins, and the father's forgiveness, which, like a devout Catholic, she believed to be registered in heaven. We venture to hope that we shall not be thought un-

charitable towards so sincere a penitent and discreet a maiden as sister Ursule, if we hint that her heart was also, in no very slight degree, lightened, and her spirits elated, by the contemplation of the picture which her active imagination painted, in colours indifferently well laid on, as if envy herself had handled the brush, of the disgrace awaiting the offending novice Eugenie. Never did penitent hasten to perform allotted penance with the alacrity with which sister Ursule disappeared from the chapel to fulfil that item of hers contained in the last clause of the confessor's injunction, an item, it will be remembered, especially relating to that worldly-minded, knight-loving Eugenie, whose numerous sins and unnovice-like peccadilloes were a thorn in the flesh of that holy, charitable, and discreet religieuse.

CHAP. VIII.

The Novice.

THE silence that followed the disappearance of the religieuse Ursule on her penitential mission was passed by the young confessor in brief reflections upon the nature and tendency of his present employment. No sophistry with which he fortified himself, through questioning the genuineness of the Roman faith, and ridiculing the act of confession, could aid him in silencing certain severe mental strictures upon the part he was acting in the sacred relation of a guest, and under a guise to which he was indebted for his safety, and the hospitality he was abusing. Neither of these could deter him from prosecuting an amour, if a wayward impulse, having, perhaps, no definite aim or other purpose than

the indulgence of a romantic temperament, could with strictness be so denominated.—“ I am aware,” he said, “ that I am playing a part both dangerous and censurable, and which my conscience refuses to defend ; but I have gone too far to recede, and my object is certainly innocent. If the scales are to be so nicely adjusted, I think the penances I have enjoined and the sins I have remitted in my assumed character, will swing evenly, so far as Doomsday may decide, with those granted on confession by worthy brother Bonaventure. But,” he continued, in a gay tone, “ to quote one of the good father’s proverbs—‘ He must needs run whom the devil drives.’”

He thus put a period to his scruples by a *coup-de-main* in the shape of a proverb, whose truth certainly does not admit of question, but under whose shelter more mischief has been wrought than his infernal highness, if so disposed, could repair.

“ Now aid me, Cupid, and shade of Walter De Lancy !” he added, as he heard a rustling behind the arras.

The next moment a graceful female figure, closely veiled, entered the chapel; and with less scrupulous observance of the forms which characterized the entrance of pious sister Ursule, she advanced with an easy undulating motion, and kneeled before the lattice of the confessional.

“ Daughter,” said the confessor, after a brief silence, during which only the gentle suspirations of the penitent were heard, while her young bosom heaved like the breast of a wild pigeon in the hands of the fowler, “ daughter, thou art come to confession, I trust, with a heart suitably prepared to receive absolution; for I am informed thy indiscretions, to give them no harsher term, have been many and aggravated; but if thou hast duly repented, I will give thee absolution, on confession, for all thy offences up to this time, for I do not desire to be rigorous with youth. Thou mayst confess, beginning with the hour of matins. But first put aside thy veil, daughter, that I may see if thy looks show thee to be sufficiently penitent.”

The novice, from the mysterious yet elated manner of sister Ursule, who could not altogether disguise her pleasure as she communicated her message, and from some ominous words dropped by her, of which she could only distinguish the sounds "Norman knight," had anticipated from the father confessor a severe rebuke and onerous penance ; but when she heard the unusually mild tones of his voice, which the monk had now learned to disguise still more by placing his lips to one of the numerous apertures of the lattice, as if to the mouth of a tube, she experienced infinite relief, and drawing aside her veil, prepared with cheerfulness and confidence to make her confession.

The removal of her veil, which is seldom worn at confession, exposed to the gaze of the young confessor, as he surveyed them through the interstices of the confessional blinds, the features of a strikingly-beautiful girl, not more than sixteen years of age. Her hair was of the richest shade of auburn, and escaping from the confinement of the virgin fillet that bound it, flowed in golden luxuriance over her faultless

neck and finely-turned shoulders, the exquisite shape of which was eminently displayed by the dark-coloured and closely-fitting habit that she wore. Meeting close at the throat, where it was secured by a jet clasp, it descended to her waist, exhibiting its fine proportions and perfect symmetry to much greater advantage than worthy sister Ursule, or perhaps the inventors of this religious costume would have approved, had their carefulness in departing from the sin-alluring garments of the world partaken more of worldly wisdom. The dark colour of her attire gave also additional lustre to a complexion remarkably clear and brilliant. This was especially exemplified in the contrast between the sombre hue of her habit and a pair of snowy hands, soft and childlike in appearance (the taper fingers, nevertheless, showing those graceful proportions indicating the maturer maiden) which, protruding from the closely-cut sleeve, were demurely crossed on her bosom. Her eyes, at first, were meekly cast down, as became the circumstances and attitude of the penitent, offering to the gaze of the admiring soldier dark lashes,

like silken fringes, shading and quite concealing the orbs beneath; but when, embarrassed by the silence preserved by her confessor, who, forgetful of his situation, drank in with his eyes her unconscious beauty, she timidly raised them to the lattice, they beamed with intelligence and a sweetness of expression just sufficiently mingled with passion, or, to speak with greater truth, love, to be irresistibly fascinating. They were of that peculiar shade of brown, often united with auburn hair, closely allied to black, and commonly designated as such, but which is more nearly assimilated to the rich hue of the chesnut; they were full of lambent fire, and ready to kindle into flame, or overflow with tenderness, as the changing impulses of her soul played in their dark and dangerous depths. Her beauty was of an oriental cast; her face oval; her forehead low, but pleasing, and falling into a nose of classic beauty. Her mouth was small and more exquisitely formed, and infinitely more fatal, than Cupid's bow, who, it is fabled, stole from beauty's lips its graceful shape.

An air of demure submission pervaded her

whole manner, the existence of which was denied, however, by an arch expression playing about the corners of her mouth, and a piquant glance that her drooping eyelids could not altogether conceal.

Her beauty was the more striking from the absence of affectation, as, unconscious of observation, or, at least, of exciting admiration, she kneeled artlessly before the confessional, oblivious of those little airs which, if she had known who gazed upon her, she might have called to her aid, but to diminish rather than increase the charm created by her ingenuous loveliness.

The young confessor, in the ardour of his admiration, had wellnigh forgotten his assumed character, and, yielding to the impulse of youthful passion, was about to rush from the confessional to cast himself at her feet, when the peculiar harp-tones of her voice, which had so thrilled upon his senses when he first heard them, in scarcely audible prayer, recalled him to the duties, now, at least, sufficiently agreeable, of his usurped station.

Raising her eloquent eyes, she said, sweetly

and persuasively—"Father, I hope your silence is not from anger that I said what I did about the Norman knight, for I know that envious nun, Ursule, has told you of it."

"No, my daughter," replied the confessor, with difficulty addressing youth and beauty in the gruff tones of father Bonaventure, at the same time impatient to throw off his disguise and appear before her with all the advantages of youthful eloquence and fascinating address, graces which few possessed in a more eminent degree, and of whose power over the female heart no one was more conscious; "no, Eugenie, I am not offended. But, as thou hast voluntarily renounced the world and its vanities, thou shouldst think of no other bridegroom than the church, to which thou art betrothed."

"No, no, I have not voluntarily renounced the world, father," she replied, with some warmth, her dark eye lighting up with animation; "although I love the church, I do not love it enough to relinquish all the enjoyments of life for it. May not heaven be won without such sacrifice? I would rather try my chance with others, to

whom the green earth is as free as to the forest deer, than be mewed up here all my life, till I come to be such a withered spectre as nun Ursule, who I verily believe would forfeit her soul's salvation, if she could see me this day the counterpart to herself."

This was said with feminine spirit and the pouting lip of a spoiled child.

"Then why art thou here, daughter, if against thy will?" asked the monk, becoming interested in the fate of the lovely penitent.

"Because," she replied, with feeling, "the will of others was stronger than mine. I have been here four months to-morrow, father; but before I remain eight more, and then take the veil, I will make my escape. I never knew," she continued, with emotion, "how to compassionate poor imprisoned birds till now. I remember reading in one of my English books, how a poor starling shut up in a cage continually cried, 'I can't get out! I can't get out!' I know how to feel for the poor starling now, father!"

She spoke these words with a natural and

touching eloquence that affected the young soldier, while the heavy drooping lid and increased lustre of her eyes betrayed the depth of her own emotion.

“ And who forced thee, my child, to embrace a life for which thou hadst no inclination ?” inquired the monk, with additional interest in the fate of the lovely novice.

“ My guardian and uncle, the vicomte St. Clair,” she answered, with an indignant flash of her eyes, and a scornful curl of her beautiful upper lip ; “ but I thought you knew this, father ?”

“ Yes, Eugenie, true ; but I had forgotten. Where now is thy uncle the vicomte ?”

“ Gone from Quebec to France, to take possession of my grandfather’s estate, which should have been my own inheritance through my father, who was the eldest son.”

“ And he has placed thee in this convent, that, through thy taking the veil, he may usurp thy right.”

“ He has, father. He urged, remonstrated, and threatened, and I had no other alternative than to yield to his tyranny. He was my guar-

dian, on the death of my father, colonel De Lisle, who fell by the side of the noble marquis De Montcalm, in the attack on Quebec. The fatal tidings were conveyed to my mother, then at Montmorenci. She survived him but a few weeks, leaving me an infant. The vicomte St. Clair, whom my mother had appointed my guardian, consigned me to the care of a madame Montmorin; she was the widow of a distinguished officer, and a friend of my mother. I resided with her until my uncle, who had been living upon my father's property in France, tempted by his cupidity and his fears of soon being dispossessed (as I was nearly of the legal age to enter upon the possession), resolved to deprive me of it. He arrived at Quebec in May last, and by entreaties, promises, and threats, induced me to consent to enter, as a novice, the Hotel Dieu. After six weeks' residence there, I found means to escape; when the vicomte St. Clair, who still remained in Quebec, learning that I had returned to the house of madame Montmorin, came for me. Deceived by his artful language, this lady permitted me

to be taken away by my uncle, who conveyed me here, bidding, in my hearing, the superior to guard me as if I were a state's prisoner. It is thus, father, I came to be an involuntary inmate of a convent; but," she added, firmly, " I will not remain here; even the assumption of the veil itself should not prevent my improving the first opportunity of escape."

Her narrative was given with a degree of animation that heightened the beauty of her features, and communicated to them the additional attribute of moral sublimity. During the recital, her eyes lighted up with varied impulses; filial pride, while she spoke of her father's soldierly death; resentment, when she alluded to her wrongs; affection, when she spoke of her friends, like the changing features of an April sky reflected in a lake, were mirrored in them.

As the young soldier listened to a theme well calculated, coming from such lips, to awaken the chivalrous spirit in a youthful breast, he was scarcely able to moderate his indignation, or refrain from at once declaring himself the cham-

pion of her wrongs. But while he mentally resolved, with the prompt decision of a romantic youth, to become her sworn knight in this cause, and deliver her from an oppression which both his education and sense of justice declared to be illegal and criminal, his heart at the same time entering a protest against it, of at least equal strength, he decided to prepare the way with caution and safety both to himself and the interesting object of his sympathy. The confession of the nun Ursule had furnished him with a clew, by which he determined to be guided in his contemplated enterprise.

“ Daughter Eugenie,” he said, addressing her as she kneeled before him with a heaving bosom and a cheek still glowing with excited feelings, “ my heart shares with thee thy unhappy destiny. Thou hast been speaking to sister Ursule of Walter De Lancy, and instituting some comparison between him and father Bonaven——, that is to say, myself.”

“ Nay, father,” she said, an arch smile mantling her lips as she spoke, “ but you have already given me absolution for this. But, father,

is not your voice strangely altered this morning ?”

“ It is the cold and snow—the snow, daughter,” replied the confessor, in a voice which father Bonaventure himself would have mistaken for his own. “ But I would speak to thee of this Norman knight. Thou sayst that, in the guise of a confessor, he entered the convent and shrived the inmates ?”

“ Yes, reverend father,” she replied, hesitatingly, “ it was in Normandy ; and a brave knight, and one worthy a maiden’s love he was. But that was in the days of romance, father,” she added, with a gentle sigh ; “ such things are not now known except in olden tales.”

“ Perhaps not, Eugenie,” said the young soldier ; “ but what now wouldst thou give, if I, thy father confessor, were to prove a knight, not so gallant and comely, perhaps, as thy Norman De Lancy, but young, and brave, and willing to go the death to free thee from thy imprisonment ?”

“ You a brave and gallant knight, father Bonaventure !” repeated the novice, laughing.

“ Even so, novice ; what wouldst thou give ? ”

“ I would give you, if you were as you say,” replied the maiden, with a smile that doubtless would have captivated the heart of father Bonaventure if he had been in the place of his dangerous guest, while her face beamed as if there had been liberty in the thought, “ what the novice, for whose love this brave knight disguised himself, gave to him—heart and hand : what more could maiden give ? ”

“ Eugenie,” said the young soldier, in his natural tones, but modulated to the gentlest and most persuasive accents, “ be not alarmed at my voice. Retain, I beseech you, your presence of mind. I am neither father Bonaventure nor a confessor, but a young soldier, your Norman knight if you will, who will place you free as the wild roe beneath the blue heavens, with his life’s purchase, and within the hour, if you will trust to his loyalty and honour.” As he spoke he opened the door of the confessional, and stood before her.

At his appearance she shrunk back with the extremity of alarm visible on her countenance.

Gracefully and tenderly taking her passive hand, he threw back his cowl, and exposed youthful and handsome features, instead of those of father Bonaventure ; and those same dark eyes whose passionate fire had already lighted a flame in her heart, again met her own.—“ Be not alarmed, fair Eugenie,” he said to the bewildered novice, who scarcely knew whether she was awake or dreaming, at so sudden a realization of her romantic wishes ; “ deign to accept me as your Norman knight, and I will free you from this dreary prison.”

“ What guarantee have I of your good faith, sir cavalier ?” she asked, recovering her presence of mind, and archly smiling as she withdrew her hand from that of the young soldier.

“ In proof of my sincerity, lovely girl,” said the youth, smiling in his turn, and speaking in a tone that carried confidence to her bosom, “ I am about to confide to you my safety, and perhaps my life.”

Thus speaking, he advanced to and carefully secured both entrances of the chapel, and then returned to her, cast aside his disguise, and, to

the increased surprise of the astonished maiden, appeared before her in the gay and gallant costume of a colonial officer of rank.—“ Now, Eugenie,” he said, placing his foot with something like contempt upon the monk’s cassock, which he had cast on the ground, “ you see me in my true character, as a soldier in the army of the colonies, which are in arms against the oppression of the mother country. I have adopted this disguise that I may travel without interruption to Quebec, whither I am sent on a mission of importance by the commanding officer of a division of the colonial army now on its march into Canada. The father Bonaventure only knows me as a brother priest. I am to take my departure within an hour to pursue my journey. If you will confide in me, by my honour as a soldier and a gentleman, I will aid your escape from the convent, if I have to lead you forth in the face of the whole sisterhood, the father Bonaventure, and nun Ursule to boot,” he added, smiling. “ Fly with me, dearest Eugenie,” he persisted, in a voice modulated by love to accents of inexpressible sweetness, and

with a fascination of look and manner that was irresistible ; “ I feel that from this moment our destinies are inseparably linked. Speak, lovely one ; say that you will trust to my honour, as a sister would confide in a brother. I will be to you as a brother, and sacred as a sister will I regard you, until I place you under the roof of some friend in Quebec, or wherever you wish to find an asylum. Not one word from those lovely lips, not one look from those soft eyes, to tell me that I do not plead in vain ?”

As the tender vine, when cast loose by the tempest from its support, at length reaches and clings around some noble trunk, towards which its tendrils have been long stretched forth—as the dove, when pursued by the trained hawk, seeks shelter in the bosom of the falconer, so did the persecuted and friendless novice commit her destiny to the honour and chivalry of the handsome young soldier who suppliantly kneeled at her feet, and passionately urged his romantic suit. Just as she had yielded with downcast eyes, stern loud voices without the convent, as

if demanding admittance, accompanied by vehement knocking on the door, startled them both.

The lover hastily rose to his feet, and their eyes eloquently met: by a sort of freemasonry said to exist among lovers, more was conveyed by the magical interchange of their glances than the tongues of either could have uttered: the next moment, as if actuated by one impulse, they drew near each other, and in an instant the arms of the daring youth were encircling the yielding form of the blushing novice, and his bold lips pressed her own. With her virgin cheeks burning with shame and with heightened beauty, she bounded away from him and fled from the oratory.

He hastily resumed his disguise, and with his bosom swelling with the pride of recent conquest, and his dark eyes flashing with the triumph of a successful wooer, he hastened to ascertain the cause of the noise without. As he advanced through the gallery it increased in violence, as if the applicants held in slight veneration the sacred character of the convent, or

were influenced by circumstances to whose urgency the shelter of a convent or hostel were alike welcome.

CHAP. IX.

The Spy.

As the monk hastened through the gallery, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the clamour, so ill suited to the peaceful character of a religious abode, he was met by Zacharie, who, in a voice tremulous with alarm, but spiced, nevertheless, with a sufficient share of his natural audacity, said—"If thou likest not a hempen cravat, monk or soldier, or whatever thou art, back with thee to some lurking-hole."

"What mean you, boy?" inquired the monk, earnestly, but without exhibiting any signs of alarm; "can you tell me the meaning of this rude uproar outside the gate?"

“ That can I. There are four horsemen without who demand a spy, who, they contend, has passed this way under a monk’s cowl and cassock : and they swear round oaths, one louder than the others making oath by his beard, they will give him a short shrift and a merry dance ’tween heaven and earth, if they lay hands on him. Thou knowest best if thou hast interest in this matter, father.”

“ No trifling interest, boy, as you have guessed,” said the monk, with a calm demeanour, and apparently unmoved by this announcement of danger. Nevertheless, his eyes flashed, and his lips were compressed with determination, as, fixing his gaze full upon the boy, he said, in a low and firm voice—“ Zacharie, I must not be taken. If they break into the convent, as, from their earnest blows they are likely to, then we must see how one man can bear up against four.”

“ But thou shalt not be taken,” said the lad, decidedly, catching the spirit of the monk : “ I said last night I would serve thee, and I will now do it. But I shall have to lie roundly for it,

father, for which thou wilt, no doubt, give me absolution," he dryly added.

"No, no, boy, I alone must face these men," he replied, passing Zacharie with a youthful impetuosity, which, doubtless, would have drawn upon him the censure of the old chevalier De Levi.

"Faith, that thou shalt not!" responded Zacharie. "Keep close for the next five minutes; show neither cowl nor cassock, and I will so deal with them that they will give thee little trouble."

"But you will involve yourself in danger," said the monk, catching and detaining Zacharie by his capote, as he was about to bound from him.

"Not so, father," he answered confidently; "I know two of the loons well, for their uproar waked me, and I had a glimpse of them from the window while they were calling out for a spy they swore was concealed within the four walls of this convent, and so I hastened hither to give thee warning. Keep out of the way, father, and I will soon put them on a false scent. But I must vanish, for here come the women."

Then placing his fingers in his ears, he darted away from the monk, as the extremity of the cloister began to be filled with the terrified inmates, both religieuses and novices, of the convent, whom the noise had drawn from their apartments.

As Zacharie disappeared at the opposite end of the gallery, he turned the lock in the door leading from it into the hall, and thereby effectually prevented the monk's interference in his tactics. On his entrance the strangers were still hammering and shouting for admittance. Beside the great convent door, holding the key in his hand, and in great perturbation of spirit, sat father Bonaventure himself; he was too irresolute to apply the key to the lock, although, at each repetition of the knocks and shouts, he essayed to do it. Their demands for admission, whether made with their tongues or the butts of their pistols, he answered with a faint denial, enforced by some apt proverb, of having seen or entertained either officer or spy; nevertheless, his fears whispered to him, that if the monk whom he had left in the confessional, should prove, as

he now began to suspect, a spy, or layman in disguise—an enemy to the government he already knew him to be—his presence in the convent would result in his own ruin both with church and state.

In his most palmy state of peace and quietude, father Bonaventure was not remarkable either for energy or uncommon presence of mind. Circumstances, however, seldom called these virtues into trial, his most appalling dangers being those that threatened the much-dreaded diminution of his corporeal dignity. At this crisis he found himself in a condition of great perturbation. The entrance of Zacharie afforded him that kind and degree of relief which is experienced by the unfortunate when they find a fellow-being, however insignificant and incapable of affording effectual aid, compelled to share their misfortunes.

“Dost thou bolt that door, jackanapes?” he cried, in alarm, the last spark of his valiancy, which the assault of the marauders had left glimmering, going out as he detected this apparent conspiracy on the part of one within the besieged place; “wilt thou give me no way of es-

cape from the assaults of these godless highway-men, if they batter down the door, as they are yet like to do? Verily," he added, in the depth of his misery, " verily, I am caught like a bird in the snares of the fowler !"

" Hist, father!" replied the boy; " seest thou not that the key is on the inside, and that thou canst get out if they do not let a hole into that fat paunch o' thine, which would be a charitable letting out o' much wind, and an afterward saving o' broadcloth."

" Heaven forbid !" ejaculated the monk, rising from the bench and waddling towards the door of escape with wonderful celerity, the flesh of his cheeks and sides quivering as he rolled along, as if of the consistency of jelly.

" Ho, ho! ho, la, ho!" cried a boisterous voice without, while a blow followed each syllable by way of corollary; " wilt have a bullet hole bored through thy door, old father Bonaventure? Thou hast kept us full ten minutes waiting for thee to unbolt, and, by my beard, if thou keepest good men without in the snow, while thou art within in the feathers, we will

blow thy door through in the cocking of an arquebus, if old cloven-hoof himself stood behind it—by my beard will we, old dad !”

“ By thy beard thou wilt not, Luc Giles,” replied Zacharie, imitating, as closely as a bag-pipe could imitate a bassoon, the hoarse voice of the speaker : “ dost think thou art at an alehouse porch, that thou roarest so like a sea-horse ?”

“ By my beard !” cried the same voice, though in tones somewhat lowered, and as if addressing his comrades, “ if old cloven-hoof be not there himself, there spoke his first-born, that little hop-o'-my-thumb, Zacharie Nicolet. Ha ! my young cub,” he said, raising his voice, “ art thou there ?”

“ Ay, thou old bear,” answered Zacharie, in the same tone, “ go suck thy paws ; for thou’lt find no meat here.”

“ By the beard of St. Peter, and that was a yard long, that may be true. But see if I wring not thy neck, thou speckled hawk, hatched from a hen’s egg.”

“ Faith, Luc, an’ thou comest to that, thou

canst not tell if thou art hawk's brood or hen's brood, if all tales be true."

"Didst ever hear a young chick cackle so bravely, boys?" said the prototype of our friend Jacques, laughing loudly. "By my beard, I always get the left hand o' thy fool's tongue, Zacharie. It's ill flinging chaff against an east wind."

"Thou hast named thy witless words most aptly, Luc," said Zacharie, laughing; "and I bid thee beware, lest I blow both thee and thy chaff far from this floor, if thou goest not about thy business."

"Not till we get the grist we came for, little Nic," answered the man, doggedly.

"If thou seekest him, I guess thou wilt not find him here, Luc Giles."

"Knowest thou aught of him, lad?" inquired Luc Giles, eagerly; "'twill be worth a score of crowns in thy bonnet, if thou canst put us on the right scent. But how comest thou here, Zacharie? Hast donned cassock and turned priest, lad, hey?"

"Not I, Luc; between old mother and father

Duc, I get enough of priest and cassock at home. But, between thee and me, Luc," added the boy, lowering his voice, and speaking in a confidential tone, "I guided a monk to this convent last night; it may be 'tis him thou seekest." While he was speaking, the monk advanced through the door by which father Bonaventure had effected his retreat (which, we will mention in passing, was not stayed until he found himself, safe from ball and steel, within the chapel), and, as Zacharie ceased, he felt a hand upon his throat, and a stern whisper in his ear—"Villain, would you betray me?"

"Hands off, sir monk," said the boy, in the same suppressed tone, not the least disconcerted by this summary proceeding; "thou art over hasty with thy hands. Stand beside me, and if I prove faithless," he firmly added, "then make thy blade and my bones acquainted."

The monk, reassured by the frank and resolute tones of the boy, released his grasp, and, as if mortified at his want of confidence and his hasty act, retired to the upper end of the hall, leaving him to pursue the conference with those

without in his own way. At the same instant, amid a murmur of elated voices, Luc Giles said, eagerly—"It was thou, then, Zacharie Nicolet, that guided him hither? That silly donkey, Jacques, we met on the road at old Alice's hotel, said he had guided a monk to Ducosse's, and when I would know more, he swore at me by his beard that he would not tell. But I gave his chin a tweak," added Giles, laughing hoarsely, his companions joining in his merriment, "and by the beard o' me, I planted him a buffet over his ears, to mend his manners when in company with his betters, and so rode on. We could get nothing from old Ducosse but scraps of outlandish Latin, and pushed forward, inquiring here and there on the road, and so tracked him here. And now we've earthed the fox, by my beard, we'll have our game out of him!"

"An old fox hath a long trail, Luc," said the boy; "thou wilt have to track him farther yet, and take thy game otherwheres. He delayed here but half an hour to bait, and then pushed forward in great haste alone, for fear he should get blocked up by the snow. I fear 'twill be

hard to track him now," he added, in an inimitable tone of feigned disappointment; "by the cross! if I had known he were a spy, I'd have placed him under lock and key in father Bonaventure's wine-cellar."

"Sayst thou so!" exclaimed Luc Giles, in a tone of real disappointment; "then, by my mother's beard, we must ride for it! How far has he the start of us?"

"Good three hours; but the roads are heavy, and he must travel slow. With hard riding thou wilt come up with him ere night sets in. But how knowest thou he is a spy, Luc?"

"I saw him the night of Francois Benoit's death in the colonial uniform; and as we—that is, king George, which is all the same—be fighting with the colonies, I began to smell a rat; but before I could make up my mind whether he was a spy or no, father Etienne got him off in a monk's garb, and tried afterward to throw dust in my eyes. But 'twouldn't do! I got my mates together, took horse, and gave chase. Now, if thou sayest he has gone ahead, why we'll e'en keep on till we run down our game.

The governor'd give a round hundred crowns to catch a spy. It's for no good he's skulking through the valley, I'll be sworn. Come, comrades, let us ride!"

"If I do till we take a pull at the priest's wine-flagon, may I drink water all the days of my life!" said, gruffly, one of the party, who had not before spoken.

"Ay, ay, Gregory is the only sensible lad among us," said another: "give us a swig o' the old daddy's juice, and then we'll ride, but not a step without."

"By my beard, you say well, comrades all!" added Luc Giles. "Out with the key o' the wine-tap, Bony; if thou wilt not let us into thy old rookery, have the grace to give us a little of the genuine 'forty-five' to moisten our throats, which are as dry as a sponge with this cursed hallooing at thy door. Tip us the flagon, little Zacharie, for I'll be sworn the father has it handy."

"In the name o' the blessed St. Peter I will give thee a cup of water, and bid thee depart in peace," replied the boy, imitating the manner of

father Bonaventure, handing, as he spoke, a flagon which old Agathe, on first learning the demand, and anticipating the result, had hastily filled from a cask in an adjoining recess; "what can my sons expect but holy-water from a priest's hands?"

"Callest thou this holy water, boy?" said Luc Giles, who had taken the tankard with a gloomy brow, hearing the words that accompanied it, but now spoke like a man who is unexpectedly pleased; "if the monks and priests drink such water as this, I have no objection to turning monk myself."

The flagon was passed round, eliciting that emphatic smacking of the lips which follows grateful draughts of the juice of the grape, and drawing especially from him who had been called Gregory, a deep-drawn sigh, as if he mourned that he had no room beneath his jacket for another flagon.

"Zach, lad, thou art fit to be cupbearer to the pope," said Giles, returning the empty vessel; "tell old Bony we'll call and take another sprinkling of his holy water on our way back."

Now, good bye, and take care of thyself, Zachie," he added, ironically; "the saints send thee safely back to thy old mother's apron-string, and tell her wean thee when thou hast cut thy teeth. Come, mates, let us ride!"

"My dam's apron-string hang thee yet," replied the boy, as they rode across the court to the convent gate; "if I have not filed thy eye-teeth for thee this day, thou braggart clown, and cheated thee under thy nose, then wilt thou cheat the hangman, which thou art not like to do. Now, sir monk," he continued, turning from the window and addressing the young soldier with ready self-possession, "thou mayest abide here until night, and, when the moon rises, I'll get a faithful half-breed to guide thee to the river. This Luc Giles will give up the pursuit when he can learn nothing more of his chase, and will be back here, swearing more valiantly by his black chin than thou hast heard him do but now. But the bird will be flown, and he may give father Bonaventure the benefit of his knocks in return for flagons of holy water."

"My brave lad," said the monk, grasping his

hand, and warmly acknowledging his obligations, at the same time commending his address and faithfulness, "how can I reward you?"

"The best reward thou canst bestow," said the boy, proudly, "and the only one, too, that I will accept, is to be made a soldier such as thou art."

"You are too young, Zacharie," said the officer, smiling. "Would you fight against King George?"

"Ay, that would I against any king. But I am almost as tall as thyself," he added, drawing himself up; "it were a charity to make a soldier of me, father, lest I carve men's throats without the law on my side, as thou hast, who do it by the wholesale."

"What sayest thou of carving men's throats by the wholesale, thou prating manakin? A small spark makes a great fire. Soon ripe, soon rotten," cried father Bonaventure, who, after looking in at the door, and satisfying himself that the coast was clear, now bustled into the hall. In one hand he bore an ancient firelock, which, from the shattered condition of the stock

and a huge gape in the barrel, was, like the young Arab's fowlingpiece, somewhat given to bursting; it was, moreover, without a lock. In the other hand he carried a stout oaken cudgel, probably the most serviceable weapon of the two.

"The cowards are gone, ha?" he cried, brandishing his weapons, and advancing boldly up to the door; "'sdeath! 'tis well they fled. Mars! how I wish I had been trained a soldier! I would ha' carved their flesh for 'em. Didst hear, boy? didst hear, brother? Agathe, didst hear how stoutly I told them begone, there was no spy here? and didst not see how the door shook as they leaned against it, with their quaking at my dreadful voice?"

"Thou didst quake all over, father," said Zacharie, dryly.

"Hist, lad! Verily, brother, it was with much exercise of that Christian self-denial which our faith inculcateth on such occasions, that I could refrain from attacking, with my single arm, these four men of war. 'Sdeath, I know not to what extent my natural valour might have car-

ried me, for, of a truth, my indignation did boil within me, if I had not bethought me to take myself to prayers in the chapel against such temptations. Surely forbearance hath its reward, saith the Scripture."

"But how camest thou by that crazy old firelock, father? Is't the reward of thy forbearance?" asked Zacharie.

"I did hear a noise, as if a battering-ram were levelled at the gates," replied the confessor; "and being fortified within, I sallied forth, like David, to the defence, and did arm myself with these bloody weapons of war as I came through the gallery; and when I arrived here, behold, the enemy had fled. If men cannot bite, they had best not show their teeth."

"'Tis a pity, father, thou didst not get here before they fled," said Zacharie; "they would then, doubtless, have been well punished for their insolence, and, for the future, taught how to come roaring about convent walls."

"That would'a!" said the doughty and valorous father Bonaventure, drawing a long breath.

Then seating himself upon the settle he had lately deserted with such commendable self-denial, he placed his cudgel and firelock together across his knees, and looked towards his guest as if he desired an explanation of the affair.

It was now useless for the disguised soldier to attempt longer to conceal his real character from father Bonaventure, whose surprise on learning it was only equalled by his astonishment at the audacity of his guest in assuming the duties of a confessor. This seemed to trouble him not a little, as, from time to time, he looked askance at him, gathered his obese forehead into a frown, and essayed to give utterance to his thoughts; but his purpose as frequently failed him, either from constitutional indolence, which made speaking, at least in way of reproof, an effort, or from a conviction that his spiritual weapons would be but an ill match in contest with one armed with youth, and, peradventure, sharp steel. Father Bonaventure, therefore, gave vent to his displeasure, if one so uniformly good-natured could retain in his composition for

any length of time an emotion so dangerous to his bodily thrift as anger, in an occasional fierce look, a slight tremour of the lip, the vain promise of speech, and some half-a-dozen long-drawn sighs.

“ Reverend father,” said the soldier, whose penetration enabled him to discover the cause of his emotion, “ it would have become me better to have confided to you last night the secret of my disguise. I am not a priest in the colonial army, as you are, doubtless, already aware, but an officer therein. I shall follow this youth’s advice, and burden your hospitality until night, when I will pursue my journey, the object of which you are truly acquainted with. My secret is yet only known to yourself and this lad, for the females doubtless were too far from the scene of the late alarm, to have heard what would have given them additional anxiety: to them you can give any explanation you list; but let them not know, father, that I am the spy those men seek, or indeed that I am other than what, in this disguise, I seem.”

“ And continue to give thee my chair in the confessional, brother ;” said father Bonaventure, with a glance of humour in his eyes, as he turned them on his guest ; “ make the young wolf the lambs’ keeper, ha ?”

“ Not so, father ; the lambs are safe enough for me.”

“ Pen them in the fold, father Bonaventure,” said Zacharie, “ I’ll be their watch-dog.”

“ Beshrew me if thou wilt,” answered the priest ; “ that would indeed better the matter. The same breath that bloweth out the candle kindleth the fire, saith the proverb.”

“ But I’ll dip in holy water, father,” answered Zacharie.

“ Crows are never the whiter for washing themselves, lad. Go to, go to—I will be my own shepherd,” he added, laughing. “ Now, sir soldier, or brother, as I had best call thee in respect to thy habit, thou mayst eat, drink, and sleep as thou wilt, till thy departure : thou knowest where thy cell is situate ; ’tis thine while thou art our guest ; but see that thy steps turn not towards my sheepfold, and thou mayst safely

remain an inmate of the convent. Didst confess any one this morning, brother?" he hastily inquired.

"There's no one will say they have heard other voice than yours this day," he replied, evasively.

"The better—all the better for thee and mine," said the confessor, cheerfully; "there hath been less harm done than I dared hope; so come with me to the refectory, where sister Agathe, if these rude riders have not scared her wits away, hath made ready our morning repast. Come thou also, lad, and break thy fast; prayers and provender never hinder any man's journey. But methinks thou art rather a forward youth; wanton kits however may make sober cats." Father Bonaventure having thus spoken, preceded his guest to the refectory.

The opinion expressed by the monk in relation to the knowledge possessed by the female inmates of the convent of his real character was correct. Too remote from the hall door to hear distinctly the conversation between Zacharie and Luc Giles, they had only understood that

men were in pursuit of some soldier supposed to have taken shelter in the convent, but entertained no suspicion of the identity of the youthful monk with the fugitive. One of their number however instigated by curiosity, or some deeper feeling, had the boldness to advance beyond her timid companions, and approach the door leading from the gallery into the hall, though not without receiving a frown from the superior, and a reproof from sister Ursule. Eugenie, for it was the novice of the oratory, had heard the harsh voices of the men demanding the disguised spy, and with a strange anxiety that she could not account for, she listened until they had departed; then, possessed with the assurance of the truth of her young confessor's story, and informed of his danger as a spy, she hastily retreated, and rejoined her trembling sisters at the farther extremity of the gallery, as father Bonaventure came from the chapel to return to the field he had so discreetly and piously deserted.

We will briefly pass over the monotonous events of the day; by the young soldier it was

passed in his cell in poring over a huge black-letter tome, and in devising a plan for the escape of Eugenie ; by father Bonaventure, seated in a leathern arm-chair, placed square before the refectory-room fire, into which he vacantly gazed, with his hands clasped over the front of his comely person ; by the nuns and novices, in their rooms over rosaries, missals, or embroidery-frames ; and by Zacharie, after he had seen and arranged affairs with the Indian guide, in tinkering at father Bonaventure's old firelock, or wandering restlessly through the long passages and deserted cells of the convent.

CHAP. X.

The Flight.

THE chamber or cell occupied by the monk was situated in a remote part of the convent. A single window, guarded by a lattice of ironwork, closed by a padlock, admitted sufficient light into it, while, at the same time, it afforded the security of a prison. Extending from the ceiling to the floor, it gave egress, when thrown open, to a close gallery, or cloister, running along the rear of the edifice. This gallery was enclosed on all sides by Venetian blinds, and in summer afforded a cool and agreeable promenade, with a distant prospect of the river winding through a gorge in the hills. It was now appropriated as a greenhouse, the proper temperature being preserved by tubes filled with hot air, and

crowded with a great variety of native plants and exotics, some of which were young trees in size.

The numerous vases were so arranged as to leave a serpentine walk winding through them from one extremity of the cloister to the other, and so shaded by the foliage of the plants bordering it, that one might walk there wholly screened from observation, save when passing by the windows looking into the cells.

The evening of the day on which the events recorded in the foregoing chapter had transpired, at length arrived. A roseate hue yet lingering behind the sun suffused the sky, and reflected from the snow through the interstices of the blinds, spread a golden light over the foliage of the plants. The monk, wearied with following the obscure arguments of the old fathers in their polemical controversies, had long since thrown aside his book, and, with his arms folded thoughtfully behind him, had been for the last half hour walking his chamber, revolving in his mind the morning's interview with Eugenie in

the chapel, and contemplating its results. The final sum of his reflections was a determination to aid her escape from the religious imprisonment to which she was subjected, and conduct her to the mansion of her friend, madame Montmorin, then leave the farther progress of his love, as he already designated his brief and romantic interest in her fate, to fortune.—“ At all events,” he said aloud, “ she shall not become the victim of this villanous St. Clair. Conscious that my motives in relation to this lovely creature are pure, I will devote myself to her cause; and,” he added solemnly, laying his hand upon his heart, “ may the God of unprotected innocence judge me as I am true or false ! If she will escape with me, I will safely conduct her to the abode of her maternal friend, and leaving her there secure from further oppression, bid her farewell, perhaps for ever, and forgetting her, pursue the destiny that is before me. Palsied be the heart of that man,” he said, with a heightened glow, after pacing the room for several minutes in silence, as if replying to or combating some unworthy mental suggestion,

“ who could take advantage of her artless confidence and unprotected state ! Were she other than she is, a proud, rich, vain coquette, placing her honour in the keeping of the first bold cavalier, playing, like Folly herself, around the net which at length ensnares her—a mere human butterfly of silk and ribands, it would be an intrigue to be less scrupulously balanced. Heighho ! ’tis a great temptation,” he said, in a tone half gay, half serious, “ for one to whom laurels won in love are fairer than the bays plucked in war. Alas, that empty honour should stand in my way, and thus baffle me ! Unlike Falstaff, here Cupid bids me on, and honour bids me off. This bewitching novice, whose sweet form has already been entwined in my arms, is *mine*,” he said, emphatically, and with a sparkling eye, “ yes,” he added, in a deep and severe tone, “ mine, if I dare be a villain !” In a few moments afterward, he continued, in a different tone—“ Her extreme loveliness and *naive* manner have so effectually captivated me, at all times sufficiently susceptible to the dark eye of woman, that if I do not call in honour, her orphan state, and her

unsuspecting confidence, and weigh them nicely against that propensity for intrigue that is in me, she would better trust her vestal purity with a Rochester than with me. Well, women are, at last, but charming toys to amuse our leisure hours withal. If I, who have borne off the prize in so many successful amours, and from beings lovely as the houri of Mohammed's paradise, convey this sweet novice to her friends with the self-denial I propose to myself, I shall have won a greater victory even than all these—a victory over myself. But before I can win I must dispose my forces. How the fair novice will manage to elude her keepers passes my comprehension; but the sex have an instinctive tact in these matters, and we thicker-witted men may safely leave all to them where any plot or mischief is going forward. There rings the vesper-bell! But I must not alarm father Bonaventure by making my appearance in the oratory with his flock. Ha! I am not alone!"

The window of his apartment was at that moment darkened by a passing shadow, and a flower of the iris, attached to a sprig of myrtle, fell at

his feet. Lifting it from the ground, he gracefully pressed it to his lips, saying, in a tone of gallantry—"Fair flower de luce, emblem and pledge of promise, I accept the pledge! Yes, lovely novice," he added, in tones sufficiently audible to be heard by one standing without the open window, "my right hand shall forget its cunning ere I forget the promise I have sacredly pledged to you." Then lifting his eyes, expressive of a secret intelligence, to the window, he added, placing the flower upon his heart—

"Goddess of the painted bow,
To thee I still prove true;
With all thy tints and purple glow,
I boast thy name and beauty too."

Then looking towards the window, which was nearly covered by a myrtle, he saw, "through its luxuriant blind," the outline of a female form whose exquisite proportions could not be mistaken; but with that caution which the incident of the flower had inspired, he remained on the spot where its fall had arrested him, saying, as he placed the sprig of myrtle in his breast—"Propitious fates, accept a lover's thanks! Lo,

'Sacred to Venus is the myrtle shade.'

What stronger testimonial of requited love need wooer ask? I will wear this treasure next to my heart, for

'Myrtle on the breast or brow,
Would lively hope and love avow.'

In her own delicate and mystic language, I will assure her of my devotion," he continued, plucking a flower which grew in a vase within the recess of the window. "Here is the snow-drop, the emblem of friendship in adversity; it is a beautiful and appropriate reply."

He cast it through the window, and beheld it drop at the feet of the mysterious visitant. A fair hand hastily caught it up, and the next instant an anemone fell upon the floor of the cell. He eagerly seized it, and found a slip of paper wound around the stem. Unrolling it, he read with a beating heart—"Take no rash step. Throwing myself wholly on your honour and generosity, I consent to leave this hateful convent under your protection. I will meet you by the myrtle when the moon rises. Till then, adieu."

[In a single line below, in the form of a postscript, was added—" You will find the key of your window behind the wooden crucifix in the refectory."

The note bore no signature, but, aside from his knowledge of its source, he was assured the elegant Italian characters he so ardently perused could have had no other author than the romantic novice.—" I must try and draw her to the window," he said, in the animation of the moment, thoughtlessly, " that I may banquet on her lovely face, softened by this rosy twilight." He approached the grating, and whispered her name. The rustling of the foliage and the light sound of a retreating footstep, convinced him that his mystic correspondent had fled, choosing in this manner to intimate the danger of prolonging their stolen interview, and at the same time reprove his imprudence, where she herself had practised so much caution.

" The lovely novice has shown more discretion than I," he said, retiring from the window and resuming his seat at the table, where, instead of the volume which lay open before him,

he began to study the graceful turns of the beautifully-formed characters of the billet, as if each letter had been a flower, conveying in itself a mystic language.

The silence of midnight at length reigned within the convent walls, and every eye, save those of the monk and the novice Eugenie was sealed in sleep. The former had just dismissed Zacharie, who had entered his cell to bring the key of the window, for which the young officer had sent him, and which he found behind the crucifix, where the novice had probably placed it. Zacharie also informed him that the moon was about rising, and that the carriage and Indian guide were in readiness at the gate, the keys of which father Bonaventure had consigned to him on retiring, not wishing to be disturbed by their departure.—“ He ordered me,” continued Zacharie, “ to give him back the keys in the morning; and he bade me say that he left his blessing for thee, and to tell thee that thou hadst best settle thyself down in life in thy youth, for a rolling stone gathers no moss.”

Zacharie's footsteps had not yet died away

along the gallery after he left the cell, when the monk applied the key to the padlock, and at once removed the barricade from the window. As he stepped upon the gallery, the rays of the rising moon were visible through the blinds of the greenhouse, brightly silvering the tops of the forest trees on the opposite cliffs. With a throbbing heart, and with his spirits elevated by the romance of his situation, he moved a few steps noiselessly along the cloister, and then awaited in breathless silence the approach of the trusting and artless novice.

In a few moments a light footstep approached from the opposite extremity of the cloister, and the impatient youth advanced to embrace the expected partner of his journey ; but he started back, with his hand upon his sword-hilt, and a slight exclamation of surprise and disappointment, when he encountered the figure of a monk, visible by the rays of the lamp which streamed through his window.

His first thought was, that father Bonaventure, discovering the proposed elopement, had substituted his own person for that of the novice ;

but a second reflection, and a closer scrutiny of the height and dimensions of the person before him, convinced him that, multiplied five times, it could not become father Bonaventure. His heart, moreover, aided by that instinct which enables lovers to ascertain in a wonderful manner the presence of a beloved object, however invisible its form, and impenetrable its disguise to other optics, assured him that the lovely person of the novice, and not father Bonaventure, was concealed beneath that uncouth disguise, and the next moment his arms encircled her, while his bold lips impassionedly sought her own; but the maiden shrunk from his embrace, hid her face in confusion in the hood of her robe, and seemed about to fly from him.

The young soldier, at once alive to his own imprudence, and instantly appreciating her delicacy, seized her hand, and throwing himself on one knee before her, apologized for his warmth in so modest a manner, and in a voice touched with such sincere regret, that he would have disarmed resentment, even on similar of-

fence, in the bosom of nun Ursule, and expressed his sorrow that he should have been the cause of wounding her feelings by his rash thoughtlessness.—“ Forgive me, sweet Eugenie,” he said, in tones of deep humility ; “ it was but a momentary forgetfulness of the sacred relation in which I stood towards you as your protector, and also of your unprotected state. Say that you forgive me, Eugenie,” he continued, his voice subdued to a melancholy cadence, and rising scarcely above a musical whisper, to which, pleased yet trembling, she listened with downcast eyes and heaving bosom, “ breathe the word *forgive*, and I will offend no more.”

“ On that condition, then, you are forgiven,” she said, in tones so low, that none but the suppliant lover’s ears could have caught them.

“ Thank you—bless you—dearest Eugenie !” he warmly exclaimed ; “ from this moment I will be to you only as a brother.”

“ Then, dearest brother,” she said, in a lively tone, her confidence of manner at once restored by his seeming sincerity and deep re-

spect, "beware," and her fore finger was raised threateningly, while an arch smile dwelt on her lip, "beware, lest you consider as one of your fraternal privileges the liberty you were now about to take so very cavalierly. I am now on my guard, and not to be taken at vantage, like a certain simple maiden in a certain chapel I wot of; so be a good discreet brother, and I will make up my mind to trust you. If you had not repented, let me tell you, as you did, never frightened doe fled faster from the hunter to covert than I should have flown back to my little cell."

"'Twas indeed an escape, fair Eugenie," he said, as they entered his room.

"What! so soon forgotten your fraternal attitude?" she said, glancing at him reprovingly with her dark eyes, whose fire would have kindled a flame in the breast of an anchorite.

"Nay, if you are so severe, and will not let me call you neither fair Eugenie nor dear Eugenie, I must be silent, for my lips will shape no other mode of speech, unless," he added, in a tone of real or affected pique, "I had best call you brother, as your garb would sanction. If

such be your pleasure, never two speechless clowns jogged together to market more discreetly than will you and I ride side by side to Quebec. I'faith, scandal shall have no food for her tongue, if I can help it."

"Now you are hurt, brother of mine," she said, laughing; "but if you will promise to be good humoured on the way, there's no telling what may turn up in your favour: it's hard for our sex to remain long in one mind; so comfort yourself, my gentle brother, on our well-known fickleness. Now let us leave this hateful prison; I long to breathe the free air of heaven, if it be at midnight."

"No, Eugenie, I will not avail myself of your sex's fickleness, but rather leave my better fortune to your own generous heart."

"'Tis a pretty speech, and prettily spoken, brother. But let us not delay," she said, smiling, and advancing to the door of the cell.

"Nay, Eugenie, give me one look from those charming eyes, but one smile from those sweet lips, to assure me that there is peace between us, and," he added, emboldened by the smile on

her beautiful mouth as his eye sought and met her own conscious glare, "grant me one sisterly kiss of forgiveness.'

Before she could resist, he had snatched the boon from her lips, and the next moment was kneeling at her feet.

So much audacity, immediately atoned for by such humility, the appeasing, imploring appeal of his eyes, his silence, as if he had offended too deeply for words to avail him, at once disarmed her resentment for an offence so gracefully expiated; and with a reproving shake of the head, and lifting up her fore finger, she granted the forgiveness he so eloquently sought.—"Well, brother, I see you are incorrigible, and I suppose I must be lenient; but presume not too much on my good nature. The moon is up; let us not linger here, but fly," she added, with suddenly-assumed energy.

"This moment," he said, taking the lamp, placing himself by her side as she passed through the door. "Let my arm assist you to the carriage," he added, passing his arm lightly around her.

“ No, no, I will lean upon it, good and careful brother.”

Hastily and silently they traversed the passage to the hall, where they found Zacharie in waiting. He immediately opened the doors, and accompanied them across the court to the gate; before it stood the sleigh, to which were harnessed two small but spirited ponies. Without speaking, the young soldier assisted the disguised novice into it, and after bidding Zacharie a warm adieu, and rewarding him with gold and assurances of favouring his belligerent aspirations, he followed himself, and bade the guide drive off with what speed the convent's horses and the heavy condition of the road would permit.

The snow had settled a little during the day, and the track was by this time somewhat broken, so that they glided over the ground with greater facility than father Bonaventure's words promised, when, in the morning, he surveyed the state of the roads from the tower of his convent. The vehicle, for which the traveller had exchanged his equestrian mode of journeying, was

a light wooden body, gracefully shaped like a phaeton, with the exception of the front piece, which rose sharp and narrow, three feet in height, terminating in the curved neck and head of a swan, tastefully ornamented with silver. It contained two seats, one of which, in the back part of the carriage, and shut in by its high close sides, was occupied by the travellers, the other by the driver or guide. It was placed on *runners*, sixteen inches high, shaped like skate-irons, but consisting of a light frame instead of being made solid, and like them, terminating in a curve in front, carved or cast so as to resemble the head of a serpent. The runners sunk into the snow, which was about two feet in depth, only six inches, leaving the body of the carriage ten inches clear of the surface, over which it glided with delightful rapidity.

The back, the sides, and the seats of the carriage were warmly lined with loose furs and numerous buffalo skins, two of which, placed under the feet of the travellers and drawn up before them, enveloped their entire persons, and effectually protected them from cold, which was

still intense. The guide was seated in front, wrapped up in a capote of bearskin, and otherwise so completely covered from head to feet with furs, that both form and feature were unlistinguishable, and he more nearly resembled the animal whose hide he wore than a man. The monk, as we shall continue to call our traveller, had not yet seen his face or spoken to him, except when he bade him drive from the convent gate, to which he replied by whipping his horses, and uttering the Indian ejaculation " eh!" an interjection with him expressive either of assent or dissent, and indeed of almost every emotion.

For some time they rode forward in silence, the merry bells around the neck of the horses making the otherwise-dreary road cheerful by their lively music. At first they glided along the surface of the ground with the facility of a boat sailing on a smooth lake; but after they had travelled a few miles, the road became intersected by furrows, called *cahots*, formed in the snow by the winds heaving its surface into

innumerable small ridges. They were the most numerous where the road wound through gorges down which the wind swept unobstructed. The motion of the carriage, at these places, was like that of a boat pitching in a short sea, and well known to carriolers; often, when drawn over a succession of them, like that motion, they produce in the unpractised traveller, a sensation of nausea. Our travellers however, experienced but little annoyance; and after clearing the defile, their road became once more even, and their speed proportionably increased. The monk, now putting aside the furs from his face, addressed his taciturn guide, who, for the two hours they had been on the road, had exhibited no other signs of life than were indicated by the mechanical rise and fall of his right arm every five minutes, to lay his whip upon the back of his team, and an occasional interjection of encouragement to them, as they toiled up some more laborious hill.

“ When do you cross the river, guide ? ” he asked, as the horses were toiling up one of these ascents.

"Eh! four league, by-um-by," he replied, in harsh guttural tones, without turning his head, and holding up four fingers by way of illustration.

"We shall soon accomplish that," said the monk, wishing to converse with, and learn something of his guide; "these horses of yours do not appear to know what fatigue is."

This compliment to his steeds did not, however, draw any reply from the taciturn driver.

"Is it not near morning?" asked the monk, making a second attempt to open a conversation.

"Sun come two hours, by-um-by," replied the man, elevating two fingers, and then flourishing his whip over the heads of the ponies, as they reached the top of the hill. Obeying the hint, the horses darted down the opposite descent with the rapidity of reindeers.

"What is your name, guide?" asked the monk, as they were gliding over a level tract, after having descended the hill, with speed still unabated.

"Name, eh!" he grunted; "Indian callee Ohguesse, Canadian callee Gun."

"If your qualities, worthy Gun, do credit to your sponsors, you will be a valuable auxiliary on the road in case we are attacked. How is the ice where we are to cross the river, think you? It is, no doubt, strong enough to bear the weight of our carriage?"

"Eh! by-um-by, strong 'nough," said Ohguesse, with a nod of assent.

"Will it bear us if we remain in the carriage?" asked the monk.

"Eh!" was the satisfactory reply of the Indian, who wrapped the collar of his capote closely about his face and ears, and more firmly grasped his reins, as if he would thereby intimate that he was already wearied by his unusual loquacity.

Defeated in the attempt to open a conversation with his guide, the young soldier determined to make an attack on a quarter where, perhaps, success was still more problematical. During the first hour of the journey, he enjoyed in silence the exquisite consciousness of the

presence of the charming novice. The slightest touch of her little feet, as they nestled in the same fur beside his own, communicated to his veins a thrilling sensation of delight ; and as he felt her soft breathing upon his cheek, and listened to the audible beating of her heart, which he compared to a bird fluttering to escape from beneath the folds of her robe, he feared to speak, lest the charm on his senses should be broken.

A sound, like a smothered laugh, at the curt answer of Ohguesse, coming from the fur hood of the maiden, encouraged him to change the direction of his battery. Leaving Ohguesse to atone for his extraordinary garrulity by as long silence as he chose to preserve, he turned to his fair companion, and gently repeated her name ; but to reiterated repetitions of “ Eugenie ! sweet Eugenie ! ” there was no reply ; and believing, by her soft regular breathing, that she slept, and that his ears had deceived him, he wrapped himself in his furs, and in a few moments was also sound asleep.

It is, to be sure, altogether unprecedented in

the annals of romance, from the days of the Troubadours down to the present time, for an author to put his hero and heroine to sleep, and thus leave them, sleep, hunger, and fatigue, being three human weaknesses, to which genuine heroes and heroines are presumed never to yield; but our hero and heroine are not superhuman, but subject to like passions with ordinary mortals, like them enduring hunger and thirst, cold and heat, pain and fatigue; therefore one of them having slept but three hours for the last three days, and the other having been wakeful half the night in anticipation of her escape, they very naturally yielded to the soporific motion of the carriage, and availed themselves of that restorative to the frames of weary mortals, which nature has provided; this was the more necessary, as on the morrow they were to undergo additional excitement and fatigue, for which a good sound sleep is doubtless an excellent preparative. Trusting that they will awake at the beginning of the next chapter refreshed, and fore-armed to encounter the various adventures which may befall them as the principal per-

sonages of this tale, we will leave them to their repose and to the skill of the taciturn Ohguesse.

CHAP. XI.

The Pursuit.

WHEN the travellers awoke, which very considerably they did when their presence had become necessary to the further progress of our tale, it was already dawn, and they found, on inquiring of their guide, that they had come six leagues, and that the point at which they were to cross the river was but a mile before them. The morning was clear and cold, and the prospect that met their eyes every where dreary; but its desolation was increased by the earliness of the hour, the leafless forests, and the wide wastes of snow; the Chaudiere, which formed a

prominent feature in the scenery, was only distinguishable from the land by its more even appearance and destitution of trees.

“ Had we not best lighten the carriage by crossing the stream on foot ?” inquired the young officer of Ohguesse, when at length the guide turned from the main road, and began to approach the river in a direct line.

“ Eh ! um ground strong, so um ice strong,” replied the phlegmatic Indian, his swarthy features, now visible by the daylight, as unmoved as those of an automaton.

He drew up his horses on the verge of the frozen river, leaped lightly to the ground, and advancing to his leader’s head, prepared to lead him upon the ice. Before he left the carriage, he had disencumbered himself of his outward covering of furs, and his person and form became plainly visible to the monk, who was struck with his remarkably agile and athletic appearance. He was full six feet in height, straight as an arrow, and very slender, possessing just such a figure as, in civilized life, would be termed genteel. His cheeks were attenuated,

and his features regular, but too harsh to be handsome: a pair of black eyes glittered beneath his arched brows with an active restless expression, and alone gave intelligence to a countenance, the chief expression of which was that settled melancholy peculiar to his race; his face bore more of the traits of the Andalusian peasant than of the American Indian, although the well-known characteristics of the singular race of men were too indelibly stamped upon his physiognomy for his aboriginal birthright to be called in question. His taciturnity evidently did not proceed from intellectual dulness, for his quick and sagacious eyes seemed to observe and comprehend every thing passing around him, but rather from that peculiar feature of education, which teaches the Indian warrior that dignity and courage are slow of speech and of few words, or, as it is expressed in their own figurative language, "the warrior talks with his arm and eye, but women and birds are known by their voices."

"Why are you so silent, Ohguesse?" asked

the monk, looking sternly in his face, after having twice suggested the expediency of taking the horses from the carriage, and dragging it over the river, and receiving no other reply than the interjectional 'eh;' " *eh* is not to get us out of the river if we once get into it, Ohguesse. Why do you not answer?"

"Eagle only scream when he strike um game! jackdaw never strike um game—scream all time! Ohguesse, eagle—monk, jackdaw! Ohguesse no priest."

"A most sound and potent conclusion, I must confess, and withal, a very complimentary reply to your fellow-travellers," said the monk, as he got out to try the strength of the ice. After sounding it in several places, he added, in a peremptory tone—"Lead the horses and carriage over, Ohguesse, and wait on the opposite shore: we will walk."

He glanced at the carriage and its pile of furs, beneath which neither foot nor hand was visible, and then advancing to the sleigh, said—"Will you cross with me on foot, fair Eugenie? I fear to trust too much weight in the carriage."

"Willingly," she said, exposing, for the first time since their departure from the convent, her face to the gaze of the young soldier.

As she encountered his dark eyes, her cheeks were suffused with conscious blushes; and as he advanced to assist her to alight, and extended both arms for the purpose, she said, laughingly—"No, no, not in your arms, fair sir; I have feet, and can use them."

"They are very little ones, Eugenie, and will not support you through the deep snow. I can take you over as easily as a nurse would carry an infant."

"Art so good a nurse, brother? Really I had not believed it, if your own lips had not assured me of it. What, piqued again! Nay then, I will be as sober and as sinless of any approaches to playfulness as nun Ursule herself."

"Eh! horse ready!" grunted Ohguesse, lightly springing into the carriage, and starting the horses forward so suddenly at the same time, that the monk, who was standing on the runner, was compelled to remain with Eugenie, and share the fate of horse and carriage.

With great velocity, Ohguesse standing the while upon his seat, and urging the horses forward by blows and cries, the sleigh glided over the frozen river until it had nearly reached the middle of it, when all at once the leader was ingulphed, and nearly dragged the shaft horse after him; but the Indian checked him on the very verge of the chasm, by throwing him back on his haunches with a sudden and tremendous exertion of physical power. At the same instant, he leaped on the ice, and cast a lasso or running noose, always carried by carriolers for such emergencies, over the drowning horse's head, and tightened it until he ceased to breathe. The animal, which till then had been kicking and struggling violently, to the great danger of his companion, and the increase of his own peril, now became motionless, as if dead: floating to the surface from the buoyancy caused by this summary mode of strangulation, he was drawn out by main force from the air-vent into which he had broken, and laid upon the solid ice. Ohguesse then very deliberately loosed the rope from his neck, and the little horse began to re-

spire, at first with great difficulty, but in a few minutes, he rose to his feet, apparently, saving a little fright and a cold ablution, to which, however, the Canadian horses of any experience are accustomed, as lively and in as good travelling condition as before. The sinking of the horse, the skilful checking of the carriole, the application of the noose, and the rescue of the animal, all passed so quickly, that the monk had neither time to comprehend the extent of their danger, nor leap from the sleigh with Eugenie in his arms, or offer his assistance to the active and experienced Indian, before it was no longer required. This singular and to him novel operation was beheld by the traveller with surprise. Ohguesse, observing it, said quietly, as he signed to them to take their seats again in the carriole—"Choke him—save um life!"

Eugenie declined getting into the vehicle again; and the monk, bidding Ohguesse drive forward to the bank, aided the footsteps of his lovely charge, who neither by shriek nor word betrayed alarm during the imminent danger she had been in, and only showed her sex's depend-

ance on the more lordly being, man, by clinging instinctively to her companion. He, in his turn, asserted his manly prerogative by clasping her in his arms, when for a moment he thought, by the cracking of the ice around them, that they were all about to be ingulphed together.

The Indian, resuming his upright attitude on the front seat of the carriole, first having turned the leader loose to follow in the track of the vehicle, guided his remaining horse aside from the chasm, and uttering a shrill cry, urged him forward at his former speed. He had nearly gained the shore in safety, when the travellers, who were slowly following on foot, beheld him suddenly check the wild career of his steed, then hesitate for an instant; the next moment, cheered and encouraged by a loud and prolonged cry, they saw the horse leap a fissure several feet wide, formed by the shelving of the ice where it had been broken and piled by the current, which at this place flowed unusually swift; and both uttered an exclamation of surprise and alarm as the carriole bounded over the gap after the flying horse, who did not cease his wild

career until he had galloped half way up the opposite bank of the river.

Hastening forward, and avoiding the fissure by ascending the stream a few yards, they regained the carriole, and under the skilful guidance of Ohguesse, were once more on their way. Their road now lay along the banks of the river; the sun had appeared above the horizon, and the air became perceptibly milder. Stopping occasionally during the day at some lonely farm-house to refresh themselves and their horses, on which occasions Eugenie abandoned her clerical disguise, and was represented by the monk as a novice on her way to a convent in Quebec, an hour before sunset they were slowly ascending a hill, from the summit of which was a distant view of the St. Lawrence, when Ohguesse, whose restless eyes were constantly on the alert, uttered his usual exclamation "Eh!" but now with an accent of surprise.

The lovers were at that moment absorbed in a low and very interesting conversation, in which Cupid was doing his best to make execution in

both of their hearts.—“ Why will you not answer to the name of Walter then ?” asked Eugenie, continuing the conversation to which we have just alluded, but which it is not necessary to record.

“ Because I fear you will think more of that Norman knight De Lancy than——”

“ Yourself, brother,” she said, in a tone of raillery; “ so you have a spice of jealousy in your composition, I see.”

“ I know not if it be jealousy or no,” he said, in a low tone of tenderness; “ but I would rather hear those sweet lips pronounce my own name.”

“ Then tell me that name, mysterious brother of mine, and if it is a pretty one, and not Peter nor Paul, Moses nor Aaron, I will, if it so pleases you, try and teach the lips aforesaid to speak it.”

“ Edward—call me Edward.”

“ Edward !” she repeated, in a voice of thrilling sweetness! “ ’tis a sweet name ! I think I shall like it better than Walter.”

“ If Edward himself,” he said, in a voice half

serious, "be as dear to Eugenie as the memory of Walter, then——"

Here the lover's speech, which doubtless would have been a model for all future lovers on such occasions, was interrupted by the guttural ejaculation of Gun, who at the same time indicated with his finger the objects that had broken his habitual taciturnity.

"What do you see, Ohguesse?" he asked.

"One, two, four men! horse much break um down; no come yet, by-um-by."

The monk, comprehending the Indian's meaning rather by the direction of his finger and eyes than by his words, turned and saw on the opposite shore four horsemen travelling southward at a slow and weary pace.—"One of them is the peasant Luc Giles," said the monk, surveying them attentively; "I would recognise his gaunt frame and stoop in the shoulders, which I particularly noted as he rode off from the convent, among a thousand; those are his mates with him, as he terms them. They are now returning, Eugenie, as that singular boy, Zacharie, said they would soon do, crestfallen, and no

doubt aware that they have been deceived by the lad's address."

" See!" exclaimed Eugenie, who became equally interested with her companion in the motions of the party, " one of them stops and points towards us; and now they are all looking this way."

There were visible certain signs among the party, which convinced the monk that the cariole had not only attracted their notice, but had become an interesting object of attention.

" They will pursue us!" exclaimed Eugenie; " one of them has already dismounted, and is descending the bank to the ice. See! another tries in vain to urge his horse down the precipice, and also dismounts. Blessed Virgin protect us! How can you resist, Edward, at such a disadvantage?" she added, observing him bring his pistols round to the ready grasp of his hand; " oh, do not think of resisting! Hasten, Ohguesse, and get up this long and tedious hill; we may yet gain the top before they can reach us on foot."

" Be not alarmed, dear Eugenie," said the

young officer, pressing her hand, which she had unconsciously, in the anxiety of her feelings, placed in his; " Ohguesse, who will no doubt prove himself a serviceable gun on this occasion, this brace of pistols, and myself, will make our numbers equal. Ha ! one of them is already on the ice."

" If that be their leader, Edward, who is foremost, and from his size and clamour I take it to be him you call Luc Giles, he is not seconded by his men, who point to their horses, and seem to plead their broken-down condition. Marie ! Heaven be thanked !" she suddenly ejaculated, yet instantly crossing herself for uttering an exclamation of joy at the event she beheld.

The individual to whom she alluded, and who was indeed Luc Giles himself, not being able to make his own horse leave the road to take to the river, had gone back, after trying the strength of the ice, and mounted one of those belonging to his companions. Forcing him, by dint of spurring, much swearing, and a shower of blows, upon the ice, he was galloping across

the river alone, when, all at once, horse and rider sunk before the eyes of the pursued, and drew from Eugenie unconsciously the exclamation of gratitude she had uttered.

“ Hola, Ohguesse,” cried the monk, “ we must not let him perish!” He sprung from the carriage as he spoke, and with youthful ardour and impetuosity, would have hastened to the aid of his pursuer, when he beheld the companions of the horseman running with loud cries to his rescue : he detained the carriage on the brow of the hill, which they had now gained, long enough to see them drag the drowning man from the water, although with the loss of his horse. Congratulating Eugenie on their escape, he pointed out to her the St. Lawrence far to the north, glittering in the beams of the setting sun like a belt of silver, and then ordered Ohguesse to drive forward with the best speed his horses could exert.

As the night gathered around them, the wind, which had been light during the day, increased in violence, drifting the fine particles of snow (by the *habitans* termed *la poudre*) into

their faces, the intensely-frozen crystals inflicting extreme pain whenever they came in contact with the skin. Frequently it swept past them with the strength of a hurricane, lifting light clouds of frozen snow from the surface, along which it was whirled in wild eddies, and so thickening the atmosphere, that both horses and driver became bewildered and unable to hold on their way. The night grew dark, and their path became every moment more uncertain. The occasional howl of a wolf could be heard in the forest not far from the road ; and the fall of huge trees, torn up by their roots, crashing and echoing through the woods, the hooting of scared owls, and the mingled roar and whistling of the wind, contributed to the dreariness and gloom of their situation.

Forgetful of his own comfort, the young soldier was altogether absorbed in protecting his companion, and seeking, by every tender and assiduous attention that love or chivalry could suggest, to shield her person from the effects of the rude storm, which, although the sky was

cloudless, was more severe than if accompanied with falling snow.

At length the wind and driving snow became insupportable, and the intellects of Ohguesse were so bewildered that he could proceed no farther. Dropping the reins as the horses, unable to continue in the road, voluntarily stopped, he said, with his customary ejaculation—"Eh! horse um no go—Ohguesse no see—priest sleep in woods by-um-by to-night."

The traveller at this announcement shaded his eyes from the icy blast with his hand, and looked around upon the gloomy forest in which they were blockaded by the drifts. Satisfied from his survey that it would be impossible to proceed much farther unless the wind abated, he was about to communicate the necessity of halting to his companion, when the Indian suddenly, and with a degree of animation he had not before exhibited, said—"Eh! Ohguesse smell um supper!"

The monk, who could not boast a similar exercise of the olfactory powers, advised him to go forward, *that* being the direction in which

his nasal organ was levelled, and see if any habitation was near them. Ohguesse, after snuffing up the wind once or twice, like a hound when he scents his game, left the carriole, and soon disappeared in the darkness. In a few moments he returned, and without speaking, resumed the reins, and urged forward the horses by dint of beating. In a short time, after ascending a slight eminence, their eyes were gladdened by the glimmer of a light in the window of a cottage not far before them. The horses now moved forward with good will, as if sharing with the travellers the prospect of food and shelter. As they approached the dwelling, which stood near the road, the voices of two or three children were heard mingling in a song; and although the carriole drove close up to the door, it still continued, as if their own music had drowned that of the merry sleigh-bells, which otherwise should have notified them of the approach of strangers and travellers.

“What a contrast this cheerfully-lighted cottage and these happy voices,” said Eugenie, “to our dreary situation a few minutes ago!

But stay, Edward! Ohguesse, do not interrupt them! Let us listen to their song before we enter; it is a familiar one, and recalls days of childhood. You have no idea, Edward," she touchingly continued, "how delightful are the emotions awakened by this simple Canadian song, after having heard for so many months the monotonous and lugubrious psalms and holy ballads of the nuns. Listen, there is welcome in the words."

Yielding to the wish of Eugenie, the monk paused at the door, while she leaned on his arm and listened to the youthful singers, who were aided at intervals in the higher parts of their hymn, by a remarkably soft female voice—

" 'Tis merry to hear at evening time,
By the blazing hearth, the sleigh-bells chime;
And to know each bound of the steed brings nigher
The friend for whom we have heaped the fire.
Light leap our hearts, while the listening hound
Jumps forth to hail him with bark and bound.

" 'Tis he! and blithly the gay bells sound,
As his sleigh glides over the frozen ground;
Hark! he has passed the dark pine wood,
And skims like a bird o'er the ice-bound flood;

Now he catches the gleam from the cabin door,
Which tells that his toilsome journey's o'er.

" Our cabin's small, and coarse our cheer,
But love has spread the banquet here ;
And childhood springs to be caress'd
By our well-belov'd and welcome guest.
With a smiling brow his tale he tells,
While the urchin rings the merry sleigh-bells.

" From the cedar swamp the gaunt wolves howl,
From the hollow oak loud whoops the owl,
Scared by the crash of the falling tree :
But these sounds bring terror no more to me ;
No longer I listen with boding fear,
The sleigh-bells' distant chime to hear *."

" Here is indeed welcome," said the monk, as the song ceased ; " let us enter this abode of happiness and hospitality."

Springing from the carriage, he knocked at the door, which was immediately opened by a pale and interesting-looking woman, wrapped in

* This picturesque Canadian song, by Mrs. Moodie, the author met with, for the first time, in an interesting and highly-talented work, entitled "The Canadas," by R. Montgomery Martin, to whose researches he is also indebted for much valuable information on these countries

a grey mantelet, and bearing a light in her hand. Without betraying surprise at their sudden appearance, like one accustomed to exercise the duties of hospitality to strangers, she welcomed them with a quiet smile on her cheerful countenance.

We should delight to draw the picture of domestic happiness that here offers itself to our pen, did the limits to which fashion has prescribed the modern novelist, viz. two volumes duodecimo, allow him to turn aside to every fountain, wander through every rural lane, and linger under every shady tree, that might tempt him from the path it is especially his business to pursue ; but, providentially for both author and reader, times are changed since the novel-reading public were content to read an eight, or, peradventure, ten volume novel, such as the indefatigable Richardson turned from his pen with merciless celerity ; the modern palate, happily, is contented with two thin volumes, and surfeited with three ; therefore, although authors may have *matériel* floating in their brains sufficient, if judiciously diffused, for ten, or even a round

dozen of duodecimos, by this improvement in the tastes of the present generation, they are necessitated to condense, or compress, as it were, their abundant stock of ideas into the substantial compass of the aforesaid brace of tomes. This is intimated lest, to the disparagement of modern novelists, it might be thought that the cause of this modification of the public tastes lay in the depreciation and diminution of current coin of authors' brains, and not in its true source, the public themselves.

The reception of the travellers was characteristic of the Canadian peasantry; and they were at a loss which most to admire, the air of domestic comfort prevailing within the cottage, the excellence and abundance of the fare cheerfully spread before them on a table covered with a snow-white napkin, or the lightsomeness of heart and unaffected hospitality of manners displayed by the peasant and his wife.

The Canadian peasant, or *habitan*—especially is it true of those who are of French origin—is happily free from that servility which is the pro-

minent feature of their class in European states; on the contrary, he possesses manly freedom of speech and action, natural ease of manner, buoyancy of spirits, and a lively and enthusiastic temper. He is, moreover, proprietor of the soil, cultivating his own little farm, and enjoying the comforts of life as the reward of his individual industry. Religious, intelligent, industrious, and peculiarly susceptible of an attachment to domestic enjoyments—to the growth of which virtue the long Canadian winters, when the hearth becomes their little world, in a great measure contributes—the Canadian peasantry afford a striking illustration of the ennobling power of free institutions when operating on the interests of such a class of men, elevating them at once to the rank and dignity in the scale of society which is their birthright, but from the exercise of which feudal tyranny, by levelling them with the brutes, has hitherto alone debarred them.

CHAP. XII.

The March.

AFTER resting three hours beneath the hospitable roof of the peasant, the wind having subsided, and the calm clear beauty of the night inviting them to continue their journey, the travellers once more set forward. The horses refreshed, moved freely over the road, the bells that hung on their harness jingling merrily, and infusing that sort of spirit into their motions, which the music of the drum and fife is known to produce in a body of soldiers. The young officer and his fair companion seemed also to have imbibed new life and animation, and yielding to the exhilarating influence of the time, conversed cheerfully together, the merry laugh of Eugenie often ringing above the music of the

merry bells. Ohguesse, too, judging from his frequent ejaculatory addresses to his steeds, appeared to have been thawed into a more social mood by the hospitality of the peasant's board and hearth; and altogether, with high spirits, the carriolers glided swiftly on their way, lighted by the stars shining with that sparkling brilliancy which they emit only in winter.

They had been about half an hour on their road when the northern lights suddenly appeared with extraordinary brilliancy, dimming the stars, and diffusing a soft glow like that of twilight over the earth. With an exclamation of delight, Eugenie drew the attention of her companion to the beautiful changes their corruscations presented. At one moment they would assume the form of a waving spear of pale flame; then shooting upward, and expanding till they overreached the zenith, become a broad belt of light, which slowly faded into the sky. The next moment, sheets of light, of various colours and degrees of brilliancy, floated across the heavens, and broke into masses, that appeared like golden banners and plumes of warriors waving and dan-

cing along the horizon. These gradually disappeared, assuming a thousand fantastic shapes before they entirely vanished, but were instantly replaced by gorgeous beams of purple and golden light, radiating from a bright central spot, and spreading in a vast resplendent star over half the firmament, while columns of pale beautiful light rose perpendicularly from the horizon, as if to support the starry dome. Suddenly the whole magnificent temple would disappear, leaving "not a wreck behind." Other forms and strange shapes, more brilliant and richly covered with prismatic hues, as if a rainbow had been dissolved, and its fragments scattered over the northern skies, succeeded, and these were yet followed by others, until their eyes were dazzled and their imaginations bewildered by the wild magnificence of the scene. After assuming a myriad of shapes, this gorgeous phenomenon, in which Eugenie imagined she could trace innumerable graceful outlines of familiar objects, entirely disappeared, leaving the northern skies cold, dark, and cheerless as before.

The dawn found the travellers within two

leagues of Quebec, and near the St. Lawrence, which spread its unfrozen bosom before them like a lake. As the sun rose, the opposite shores of this majestic river were visible two leagues distant, white with snow, yet variegated by cottages, churches, and villages; while on their right, far to the north east, rose the towers and citadel of Quebec, crowning a lofty promontory, which stood boldly out into the broad river like an island of rock.

The travellers gazed on the distant city with various and mingled emotions. In the mind of Eugenie it was associated with home and its endearments; and her eyes sparkled with pleasure as she pointed out familiar objects, and spoke of her return to the abode of her childhood and youth, and to the arms of her maternal friend. Her anticipated happiness was nevertheless alloyed by the reflection that it was to be purchased by a separation, which, so busy had love been in her young heart, she began to contemplate with sadness. The young soldier viewed the proud citadel as the theatre of war, and the gathering-point of armies, its walls soon to re-

sound with the roar of cannon, and where important events were speedily about to transpire; he contemplated it as a soldier, and as a foe to its masters: with his national feelings however were mingled others, with which Cupid had more to do than Mars; there he was to take leave of Eugenie, the lovely partner of his journey, the sharer of its fatigues, the participator in all its dangers; it was therefore not without emotion, which found ready sympathy in her own bosom, that he said—"There, dear Eugenie, is your journey's end; my dream of happiness is terminated—it was too exquisite to last. This morning, Eugenie, we must part; I to go whither my fortunes lead me, you to the embraces of those you love: forget me, and be happy."

"Edward," said the novice, laying her hand upon his arm, and speaking in a soft tone of reproof, "why will you talk so strangely? Do not embitter by your sad words the last hour we are to be together. Never can I forget the debt of gratitude I owe you."

"Gratitude, Eugenie!" he repeated bitterly, "only gratitude?"

Eugenie blushed deeply, and was about to reply with drooping eyelids, but with an arch expression on her lips that contradicted the mute and timid glances of her eyes, when Ohguesse drew up at a cabin on the verge of the water, and turning inquiringly to the monk, said—"Priest hab boat, eh?"

The monk looked around, and saw that they were at a small landing-place or ferry-house, near which, attached to a rude flotilla, swung a batteau, capable of containing a dozen persons. Under the active superintendence of Ohguesse, the boat was soon ready to receive its passengers. Before leaving the carriage, the monk examined the directions for his route given him by the chevalier De Levi, and ascertained that he was opposite the residence of the priest Guise, which was on the north side of the river a few miles above Quebec, and that the ferry-boat would land him at the hamlet near which it was situated. Rewarding the faithful Ohguesse for his services, and bidding him adieu, the travellers exchanged the

carriole for the less comfortable and more dangerous batteau, and after a perilous passage through masses of ice, constantly floating by, and momentarily threatening to crush their boat, which was only saved from destruction by the dexterity and experience of two Canadian boatmen, they at length gained the northern shore.

The abode of the priest Guise was in the only remaining wing of an antiquated brick chapel, which at an earlier period had been constructed by the missionaries for their aboriginal converts; it was built on the side of a rocky terrace, and so near the water, that the river washed its walls. Proceeding for a quarter of a mile by a rude path along the shore, the travellers, after ascending a few natural steps in the rock, came to an open gate in a high wall enclosing the edifice. Entering it, they traversed a covered passage, and came to a door at its extremity, which was closed and locked. Applying for admission with that good will which their fatigue and the severity of the season rendered expedient, their appeal was answered by a tall swarthy man in the garb of a priest, with

exceedingly penetrating grey eyes and harsh features, who, without inviting them to enter, waited in austere silence for them to make known their business.

“ This is the abode of the curé Guise ?” observed the monk, interrogatively.

“ I am the curé Guise, and this is my abode,” he replied, in a voice that corresponded with his features.

“ Then it is with you my business lies,” said the monk, without noticing the rudeness of his reception.

The curé grumbled something in the way of an invitation to enter ; and replacing the bar upon the door, preceded them with an impatient stride towards a small room, through the open door of which the travellers beheld, with no little degree of pleasure, a fire burning with a bright and cheerful blaze. They entered the room, which was long and narrow, with a low ceiling, and a single window commanding a prospect of the river and Quebec. Without ceremony they advanced to the fire, while their host, closing the door, seated himself at a small table

near the fireplace, whereon, it being noon, stood a pitcher of water, a broiled fish, and a loaf of brown bread; in the discussion of these, from their dilapidated condition, it was very apparent he had been interrupted by the arrival of the travellers, and to this circumstance they were charitably disposed to attribute his ill humour. Without noticing them, he applied himself diligently to his repast, and by the time they had expelled the cold from their limbs, the fish, water, and bread, had disappeared within the copious jaws of the reverend curé; then turning round, for his back had been towards them during his meal, he looked more complacently upon his guests, eying them nevertheless with very close scrutiny.

Eugenie, by the advice of the young officer, had resumed her disguise, and muffled in her cowl and furs, passed very well as a priest, though a rather diffident one, and somewhat small of stature. During the scrutiny of the priest, she shrunk as much as possible behind her companion, who, apprehensive that her timidity would lead to the detection of her dis-

guise, abruptly addressed his host—"Thou knowest the chevalier De Levi, brother?"

The priest started to his feet at the name, bent his eyes fixedly on the speaker, and cautiously glancing his eyes at the disguised novice, replied evasively—"I know a holy man whom men call the father Etienne."

"Then thou knowest the chevalier De Levi. He bade me give you this packet," said the monk, placing the correspondence of the chevalier in his hands.

The priest ran his eye over the superscriptions of the letters, glancing at intervals at his guest. Catching his own address on one of the epistles, he hastily tore the seal, and perused it with an excited countenance; then approaching the disguised soldier, he said—"Brother, thou art welcome; and for the news of which thou art the bearer, doubly so. The time has at last come, when the dignity of the Church shall be restored, and the Canadas be free from the yoke of heretics. Where left you the army of invaders, who come friends and not enemies to Canada?"

“ Within four days they will be on the opposite shore, ready to co-operate with the other division. Can you give me any information of the movements of general Montgomery ?”

“ There is a rumour that he has already captured Montreal, and is on his march to Quebec ; but I gave no credence to it, not being informed of the invasion. The news you now bring renders it probable.”

“ It is without doubt true,” said the soldier, with confidence. “ Where is your governor, sir Guy Carleton ?”

“ With the troops near Montreal, endeavouring to defend it and the surrounding country against any attacks of the colonists. If Montreal be already in your hands, he will doubtless return to Quebec by forced marches. The city is at this moment nearly defenceless ; and if colonel Arnold would cross the river to-morrow, it would fall into his hands without a struggle for its defence.”

“ If Montgomery can out-general Carleton, and gain a march on him,” observed the young officer, “ the city will fall into his hands before

Arnold arrives; but it is important that he should be informed of our approach before Carleton can learn it."

"The fate of the country depends on the possession of Quebec," said the priest, earnestly. "Carleton knows this full well, and will not fail to avail himself of every means for its preservation. Montgomery will perhaps hesitate to advance without hearing from your division; and if he gives Carleton an opportunity of taking advantage of his delay, the city will be re-enforced, and its capture difficult."

The young man paced the room for several minutes after the priest had ceased speaking, with an impetuous tread and a flushed brow; then suddenly stopping, he said—"What you say is too true. Would to God Arnold were here! Delay will be fatal to us. Montgomery must be informed at once of the approach of our division, so that a junction of the forces may be effected as soon as possible. You can furnish horses for my brother and myself?"

"When will you set forth?"

"So soon as you can get horses ready, and

we can take a little refreshment," said the officer, glancing rather despairingly towards the empty dishes upon the curé's dining-table.

As the intelligence the officer had received rendered it necessary that he should immediately continue his journey, and as there would be danger in going into the city, now that the rumour of the fall of Montreal had reached it, it became expedient that Eugenie either should be committed to the charge of the father Guise, and trust to him for a conveyance to the city, which would have subjected her to detection and annoyance, or continue on with her companion to the camp of Montgomery, which he expected to reach that night. Eugenie reluctantly decided on adopting the latter plan, after he had promised that, immediately on their arrival at the camp, she should be placed under the protection of general Montgomery, until she could be restored to her friends.

In less than an hour after their arrival at the insulated abode of the priest Guise, they were once more on their way, coursing with a pair of fleet horses along the shores of the St. Law-

rence, leaving Quebec with its warlike battlements far behind.

“ Farewell, for a brief space, proud citadel!” said the monk, as an angle in the road concealed the city from their view; “ when next I survey your walls, it will be in other guise than this monk’s garb : but it is a garb dearly prized, my Eugenie,” he continued, gently removing her hood, and seeking her eyes, “ and one that I shall hereafter hold sacred, as having been the means of linking my fate with the loveliest and sweetest of human beings. In three hours, or at least by evening, we shall be at Trois Rivières, where, doubtless, we shall fall in with the army. There, Eugenie,” he added, sadly, “ you will find more befitting protection than mine.”

Eugenie slightly returned the pressure of his hand with which he accompanied his words, but made no reply.

They journeyed with great rapidity, learning the success of the American arms, and the capture of Montreal from every tongue. At length, about ten leagues from Quebec, on gaining the

summit of a hill that overlooked the river for many miles, and from which they could trace their road for a great distance as it wound along the shore, they were surprised by discovering the approach of a body of troops in the plain beneath, and within less than half a league of them.

“ Hold !” cried the monk to his guide or postillion (for father Guise had hired the *traineau*, horses, and driver for his guests, from the keeper of an inn in the adjacent hamlet, who sometimes kept relays for the mails between Quebec and Montreal), “ can these be Montgomery’s forces so near ? But there is too much scarlet in that host, and yonder flies king George’s standard.”

“ It must be Carleton, who has caught the alarm, and is making a forced march to throw himself into Quebec,” said Eugenie, with animation.

“ And you look, Eugenie,” replied the young soldier, laughing, “ as if you wished him success.”

“ I have known sir Guy Carleton from childhood,” answered Eugenie ; “ and though I

feel as the daughter of colonel De Lisle, I also feel an interest in an old friend, though he may be of those against whom my father drew his sword."

"No doubt you feel a deeper interest in a titled Englishman, than in a simple colonist," said the young soldier, with that morbidness of feeling to which lovers are sometimes subject. "Perhaps," he added, ironically, "Miss De Lisle would like to exchange, in case this should prove Carleton's army, her present protector for one more noble."

"The exchange could not be effected without exposing you to danger, Edward," she quietly observed, without taking any notice of his manner. "I am anxious to return to Quebec; but if Montgomery is so near, I will not alter my original determination. Is it really Carleton who approaches, do you think, Edward?"

"It is," he said, with animation. "Oh for one hour's advance of him with the gallant Montgomery's legion! But see—their vanguard is winding round the angle of yonder

wood. We must withdraw from the highway if we would not both return under escort to Quebec."

He directed the guide to turn back, and descending the hill a short distance, they entered a sledge-road, leading into the forest on their right, and in a few minutes were entirely concealed from observation in a thicket of larches. The young soldier, however, from a mingled curiosity, and a desire to ascertain the number of troops, accompanied by Eugenie, left the traineau, and cautiously approached the high road. Here, concealed in a thick clump of young pines, where, unless actually sought after, they could remain undiscovered, they awaited the march of the detachment past their post of observation.

They had been there but a short time, when a score of troopers, with a noble-looking youth at their head, the advanced guard of the army, came trotting over the brow of the hill, with sabres clashing, spurs and bridles ringing, and attended with all those martial and blood-stirring sounds which characterize the movements

of dragoons rather than the less imposing march of infantry.

“ I should like to measure swords with thee, young gallant,” said the monk mentally, as their youthful leader approached, prancing before his troop, which followed in a column four abreast; and descending the hill at a round trot, the whole body dashed past him, stern and silent, and disappeared in a wood at the foot of the hill.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, when a heavy dull sound, like the continuous noise of a distant waterfall, fell on their ears, and gradually increased, till the ground seemed to shake beneath them. The monk watched eagerly in the direction of the approaching sound, and in a few moments saw a single horseman, in the uniform of an aid-de-camp, with waving plume and drawn sword, make his appearance on the brow of the hill, rein up his spirited horse as he gained the summit, and survey with a quick glance the descent before him; then casting a look down the declivity he had just ascended, he paused until another officer joined him. Both putting spurs to their horses, then galloped down the

road out of sight, just as the helmets of a platoon of infantry appeared over the brow behind them. Another and another platoon followed, till a whole column appeared, all marching in good order, shoulder to shoulder, like the steady advance of one man, and in a compact body moved down the hill, without music, and with a dead heavy tramp, for which Eugenie, as she listened to it with sensations of awe, in vain searched her imagination for a simile, so unearthly was the sound, so unlike any she had ever heard.

The rear of this column of regular troops was still in sight, when a cavalcade of officers appeared trotting slowly along to adapt their movements to the march of the infantry. They were seven or eight in number, the majority of whom were quite young men, and all but two of them wore the British uniform; these were in the light simple dress adopted by the Canadian cavaliers, who had volunteered their services for the war, some of them bringing and commanding companies of their own levying.

In the midst of this group rode an elderly of-

ficer, in whom, to a gentlemanly and strikingly military appearance, was united that manly and intrepid air characteristic of the British soldier: he was in conversation with an aid-de-camp who rode by his side. Halting a moment on the ridge across which the road wound, he surveyed with a military eye the route before him, and then at a slow pace again moved forward, passing so near the grove of pines, which stood within a few feet of the highway, that a portion of his conversation was audible to the concealed travellers.—“ If colonel Arnold, as this rebel styles himself,” said the superior officer, who, from the insignia of his rank, was a colonel, and commander of the battalion, “ should arrive at Quebec before us, M’Lean will hardly hold out against a vigorous attack.”

“ If the intelligence we received at Montreal be true,” replied the aid; “ but the messenger sent yesterday by colonel M’Lean reported that nothing had yet been heard from him.”

“ Were he already at Point Levi, ay, in possession of Quebec, he should not hold it twenty-four hours after our arrival,” said the other.

“ If he is like this Hibernian Montgomery,” observed a young officer, with a light mustache on his upper lip, “ he will take Quebec before we can throw our forces into it.”

“ No men fight so well or desperately as rebels,” remarked the elder officer. “ These colonists may probably at first succeed in a few enterprises, but the rebellion eventually will be crushed. M’Lean is a gallant soldier, and though he has but a handful of men, and two thirds of the line of walls must be left undefended, he will not capitulate so long as he has a man left to apply a match or draw a trigger.”

“ For but one hour of Montgomery !” exclaimed the impatient monk, as they passed by and disappeared in the forest.

“ St! my hasty knight,” said Eugenie, placing her hand on his mouth. “ You will not have even a minute of your own, if those fierce-looking men discover us,” she added, glancing with some alarm towards a second division of the army which that moment appeared, and by the music of drum and fife marched by with a lively

step, its prolonged column winding, like a huge centipede, down the hill, till it disappeared in the forest at its base. Another column followed this, preceded by two or three officers, possessing very little of the military air. This body of troops was without uniforms, irregular in its appearance, and unsteady in its march. The soldiers, or volunteers, who composed it, evinced, by their independent movements as individuals, a sovereign contempt for the simultaneous planting of feet to the ground, the full and regular front, and stern silence characterizing the regular troops that had preceded them. They marched, or rather crowded forward, like a mob which has endeavoured to assume something of a military aspect, some with their muskets slung across their backs, others carrying them like spades over their shoulders, as if familiar with the mode; others were entirely without them; but their absence was accounted for in the appearance of a huge negro, tramping along behind with some half a score of these weapons of war lashed on his back, doubtless to be resumed by their owners in case of need. Some were

smoking, one or two were singing the fag-end of a ballad, while the majority were exercising their tongues in a loud and boisterous manner. As they went by some of them straggled along the road so widely, that our travellers in ambush momentarily apprehended discovery from an accidental detour upon their place of concealment.

They had nearly all passed by, when a loiterer in a fox skin cap, with the brush hanging down his back, and in a capote of shaggy furs, stumbled so near their place of concealment, that Eugenie uttered an involuntary exclamation, which only the thickness of the fur about his ears prevented him from hearing. Another, who followed him closely, still further alarmed them for their safety, by breaking off a sprig of larch from one of the bushes screening their persons, and sticking it in his bonnet like a plume, with which he moved on after his comrade with a prouder gait than before.

When the last straggler of a miserable herd of noisy camp-followers of both sexes, and several baggage-waggon had passed by and disap-

peared, Eugenie drew a long breath, as if relieved from anxiety felt rather for her companion than herself, and said, in a lively tone—
“ Marie be thanked, you are now safe !”

“ You are not quite a soldier yet, my Eugenie,” he playfully said, “ although you have just beheld the march of an army, if these few companies can be dignified with such an appellation : the ~~vanguard~~ is yet to pass ; this long serpent has a tail as well as head and body. Hark ! there sounds a bugle ; they are calling in, and warning the stragglers to fall into line of march, and keep up with the main body. See, they approach !”

As he spoke, a squadron of about thirty horse appeared, with a banner fluttering in their van, on the brow of the hill, preceded by a trumpeter, who halted as they gained the summit, and blew several notes loud and long. The party then rode slowly down the hill, laughing and talking in the rude and reckless manner characteristic of soldiers, who, ever at war with death and familiar with its aspect, give less thought to it, even on the eve of battle, than

peaceful citizens, accustomed to contemplate it less familiarly and under different features and circumstances, are prepared to believe.

After this troop had swept past the disguised officer, whose bosom glowed while these warlike scenes passed before his eyes, burning with impatience to mingle in the approaching strife, he hastened back to the traineau. In a few minutes they regained the high road, now trodden solid by the feet of many hundred men, and proceeded on their route towards the camp of Montgomery.

CHAP. XIII.

The Camp.

THE first division of the colonial, or as it styled itself the American army, which, led by the gallant Montgomery, invaded Canada by the way of Lake Champlain, had been victorious in

every contest in which it had been engaged. Montreal, Longueuil, Chambly, and St. John's, with other important posts, successively surrendered to its arms, while military stores, artillery, provisions, and camp equipments, in great quantities, fell into its hands; all Upper Canada, in fact, by the fall of its strongest post, Montreal, was in possession of the Americans. General Montgomery wisely determined to follow up his brilliant successes, by forming an immediate junction with the second division of the invading army under colonel Arnold; for this purpose he resolved to advance on Quebec without delay, hoping to meet a messenger, as it had been preconcerted between himself and that officer, dispatched to inform him of his approach, and thereby enable him to execute his plans for a speedy and effectual co-operation.

General Carleton, at this period governor of Canada, on the breaking out of hostilities between the American colonies and Great Britain, had promptly marched to defend Montreal and the adjacent frontier against any incursions of the rebels; but unsuccessful in his exertions to

save that place, and alarmed by rumours that a second army had marched through the wilderness of Maine against Quebec, he trembled for its safety, for he was aware that the government of the province was lodged in the hands of those who held possession of that citadel, then styled the Gibraltar of the western world; he resigned therefore to Montgomery the present fruits of his victories, and by an able movement, drew off his forces, and advanced rapidly to its relief. After accompanying the detachment a few leagues, impatient at its slow progress, he threw himself with a few attendants into a boat, that he might precede it by a quicker route; while, with a fair wind, he sailed down the St. Lawrence, his troops, with forced marches, were approaching the city, within half-a-day's march of which they had arrived when our travellers encountered them.

General Montgomery in the mean time, after taking such steps as should secure the possession of his conquests, followed in the track of the British troops. Except by vague and unofficial reports, he had not received any tidings of the suc-

cess of his coadjutor since his departure from New York; his anxiety to learn how far he had been successful, was therefore in proportion to the stake depending on their enterprise. He was aware that an immediate combination of their forces was necessary to secure what advantages they had already gained, and even to the accomplishment of any thing further. He indulged indeed, though faintly, the hope that Quebec had already fallen into the hands of colonel Arnold. This hope however did not retard his movements; after a forced march he at length arrived within fifteen leagues of the city, and pitched his camp in a wood the night of the day on which our travellers, after beholding the march of the British forces, once more resumed their journey.

It was already midnight, when, after having made a second visit to his outposts, and taken those precautions against surprise, which an experienced soldier will never neglect, whether danger be distant or immediate, general Montgomery entered his tent, and threw himself, in his fatigue dress, upon a pile of furs that formed

his couch, and the only protection from the snow which covered the ground. He had just fallen asleep, when he was disturbed by the entrance of the sentinel who guarded his tent.—“How now, Horton?” he said, waking with that readiness characteristic of men who sleep in the midst of danger.

“A messenger from colonel Arnold, sir.”

“Admit him. Now is Quebec mine!” he added, with exultation, as the sentinel left the tent. “Ha! a priest? But priest or layman, you are welcome, sir,” he said, advancing to meet the individual whom the soldier ushered into his presence. “What news do you bring from colonel Arnold?”

“I left him three days since,” answered the messenger, “marching with a weary but determined army towards Quebec; he is now within two days’ march of that place.”

“And I more than one, with Carleton between me and its gates!” exclaimed Montgomery, with a gesture of impatience. “Well,” he added, rapidly pacing the tent for a few se-

conds, " we shall only have a little harder work than I anticipated. Carleton will now give us an opportunity of gazing at the outside of his walls for a few days before we can get on the inside ; our troops will have an opportunity of shewing their gallantry, that is all."

" They have already shewn it, sir, if what rumour tells us be true. Permit me, general Montgomery," added the messenger, with grace, " to congratulate you on the success of your arms. If Heaven had favoured us with a speedier march through the wilderness, I had fleshed my maiden sword under a brave leader, at least."

" Ha ! say you so ? By my sword ! there spoke the soldier then, beneath that monk's cowl," said Montgomery, eying him fixedly ; " your words smack of the camp rather than the cloister, fair sir."

" I have so long lived in cloisters and worn their priestly vestments, that I had wellnigh turned monk in earnest. That I have had temptation to do so," continued the messenger, smiling, " yourself may judge, when I bring

forward the arguments to which I had nearly yielded; but first let me put an end to this mummerly. I am no monk, general Montgomery," he added, throwing off his disguise, and casting it contemptuously on the buffalo hides at his feet, " but a volunteer in the army under colonel Arnold, and dispatched by him with a verbal communication to make you acquainted with his movements and intentions."

When general Montgomery beheld the sudden metamorphosis of his visiter, and found that an armed stranger stood in his presence instead of a peaceful monk, he involuntarily placed his hand upon the hilt of his sword, as if apprehending treachery; but the youthful and elegant appearance of the young soldier, united with his frank and graceful bearing, forming a marked and favourable contrast to the slouch and awkward monk whom he had gazed upon but a moment before, at once inspired him with confidence. After looking at him steadily for an instant, he approached him, and cordially grasping his hand, said—" My brave young gentleman, you are welcome indeed. I had despaired

of much accurate information, when I beheld a priest the bearer of colonel Arnold's communications ; but now I shall learn all. Sit with me on this buffalo's robe, which is both my bed and sofa, and let me hear what tidings, good or ill, you bring from my gallant colonel."

At once relieved from any embarrassment, which, as a stranger, he might have anticipated on meeting with general Montgomery, by the affability and simplicity of his address, he forthwith detailed to him, with a brevity and intelligence, and a knowledge of military tactics which pleased while it surprised him, the character of the re-enforcement on its way, the number of efficient men he might depend upon, and the probable time of their arrival at Point Levi, and junction with his own forces. He also informed him of the march of the British army, of their number and condition, and finally gave him, briefly and pleasantly, a history of his adventures.

The communication of the young American was received by the chief with undisguised gratification ; and his eye glowed with sanguine

anticipations as, in turn, he eloquently laid his plan of operations against Quebec before his guest, whose intrepidity, intelligence, and the knowledge of the business of a soldier he had betrayed in his remarks, had inspired his entire confidence.

“ Now, my young friend, as you hold no commission under colonel Arnold, I shall insist on attaching you to my staff, appointing you as one of my aids. What say you to sharing my laurels, young sir ?” he added, smiling and taking his hand.

The young officer pressed it in silence ; but the proud glance of his dark eyes, and the sudden suffusion of his brow spoke deeper gratitude than any words, however well chosen, could have expressed ; it was the grateful acknowledgment of the heart, not merely of the tongue.

General Montgomery was flattered by the display of emotions so praiseworthy in the chivalrous young man, and felt additional assurance that his appointment had not been misplaced. Brave and intrepid men read each other at a

glance : while he surveyed his calm forehead, and listened to the manly tones of his voice as he related the business of his mission, he felt that he was in the presence of no ordinary spirit, and with one kindred to his own.—“ Now, my young major,” he said, after a few moments’ discussion of the plans he had detailed, “ you must be fatigued, and we will, for the remainder of the night, share this hairy couch together ; it may not be so tempting as you have found among the monks, to whose arguments in favour of leading a monkish life, I think, you a while since observed you had wellnigh yielded. But pray, why look you so intently towards the door ? Have you a brother monk without ?”

“ Only the arguments I spoke of, general, in the shape of a pair of black eyes, fortified by a pair of sweet lips.”

“ Surely the novice you tell me you so romantically eloped with cannot be in camp ?”

“ She is now in waiting by the fire without the tent, and I doubt not, somewhat impatient at my long absence.”

“ A Cleopatra in the train of my young

Mark Antony! It's an ominous beginning of your military career," said the general, playfully. " Nevertheless," he added, shaking his head disapprovingly, " she must be admitted. But what can be done with her? I cannot well make an aid-de-camp of a petticoat."

" I have rescued her," said the young soldier, in a firm but respectful voice, " from gross oppression and imprisonment, no matter by what other names the priesthood may gloss it over; I have brought her to your camp, generally Montgomery, to place her under your protection, until, as I have already informed you, she can join her friends in Quebec; for I am sufficiently conscious of the impropriety of being longer her protector."

" You are indeed wonderfully discreet," remarked the general, with humour, " to deem a young cavalier of some twenty-one years, with a tolerable face and figure, to say no more, an indifferent duenna for a wild runaway nun. Well, I suppose I must give an audience to this Delilah, and I will forthwith consign her to the care of my good lady, who is not far behind.

Cupid defend me! if she be as lovely as you have described her to me, I mistrust my worthy dame will be jealous of my protectorship. But favour me with a sight of this fair vestal, under whose auspices you have entered the army."

Returning the playful irony of his general with a smile and blush, he left the tent, and in a few seconds returned with the novice, still disguised as a priest.

"What, ho! another monk? We shall have our camp converted into a holy brotherhood, and go to battle by sound of mass instead of fife and drum. Ha! another masquerade? Verily, young gallant, you are bringing back the days of romance, when knight and lady went mumming on adventure through the land. But if ever angel were embodied, one has descended into my tent this night," he exclaimed, as Eugenie, at the solicitation of the young soldier, dropped her disguise, at the same time partly unveiling her face, and displayed features, the brilliant and striking cast of which must have impressed the most indifferent beholder.—
"Pardon a soldier's rudeness of speech, lady,"

he said, gracefully taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips with that courtly and profound respect which characterized the formal gentlemen of the day, " I know your story. If a convent's walls could have held out to you any charms, or if your tone of mind and disposition had fitted you for a monastic life, then perhaps it would have been best that you should have remained with your spiritual guardians. Nay, dear young lady, I do not censure you ; I am merely expressing an opinion, unimportant however to my purpose. From this moment look on me as your paternal guardian : in the morning I will send you, with a suitable escort, to Trois Rivières, to the hospitable mansion of a friend to our cause, colonel Olney, who will place you with your friends the earliest opportunity ; there also you will meet Mrs. Montgomery, in whom you will find a lady as amiable and dignified as she is lovely ; I will drop a note to her by you ; in a few hours after leaving the camp you will be with her : do not hesitate to embrace my offer, Miss De Lisle, it is made in affection and good will. For you to, remain

longer with my young knight here, will be, you are doubtless aware," he continued, smiling, "in some degree indecorous, according to the notions of our provincial maidens."

Although affected by the kind manner and friendly words of the dignified chief, the lovely novice, from time to time while he was speaking, cast timid and troubled glances towards her late travelling companion. He interpreted her looks, and drawing near, took her hand, and said softly—"Now, dearest Eugenie, preserve that noble fortitude which has so repeatedly challenged my admiration. Accept the kind invitation of general Montgomery, and take shelter beneath the hospitable roof of colonel Olney; if you will allow me to do so, I will accompany you part of the way: your own heart must tell you," he added, still more tenderly, "that I would accompany you quite to Trois Rivières—nay, never leave you; but duty to my country, honour, every thing dear to a man and a soldier, bid me tear myself away. Tell me that you will comply with general Montgomery's

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request, and you will make me happier than I can express."

Eugenie listened in silence, and when he ceased, in the abandonment of the moment, overwhelmed by a vivid sense of her destitution and loneliness, heedless of the presence of a stranger, and forgetful of all else but the proposal which was to separate her from one who so entirely possessed her heart, she flung herself weeping upon his shoulder.

The impassioned lover imprinted a kiss upon her forehead as he supported her form; the touch of his bold lip electrified her, and restored her at once to self-possession. Hastily disengaging herself, covered with confusion, from the arm which half encircled her waist, though so lightly that she scarcely felt that it sustained her, she said softly—"Any thing, Edward; your honour is dearer to me than your love—go where it calls you; think not of me; do your duty on the field of battle, while I fly to the altar to pray for you. Sir," she added, turning to general Montgomery, who had beheld this little scene between the youthful pair with

mingled emotions of suspicion, as he marked the passionate glances, dangerous smile, and soothing words of the young man, of pity, while he surveyed the lovely form of the confiding girl, as, true to her sex, in total recklessness of all else but her woman's love, she threw herself upon his bosom, "sir, I will accept your generous offer of protection, and intrude upon the kindness of your friend, until Heaven sends me better fortunes."

"Then, my sweet child," he said, in his usual amiable and cordial manner, "you are from this moment my daughter. Wilt yield me a daughter's obedience?"

"Willingly, my kind parent," she replied, ingenuously extending her hand. "But you will promise I shall soon see my brother?" she asked, with a faint return of her usual archness, glancing as she spoke towards the young soldier.

"That I promise. Now, my child, you are fatigued: this is a somewhat rude couch for thy tender limbs to press, but sound sleep will make that shaggy bear skin a pillow of down: for this

night I resign my tent to you. As for you, young sir, I shall be honoured by your company while I visit the chain of sentinels. Horton," he said, as he passed the sentinel, who was walking backward and forward before the tent, the barrel of his musket gleaming in the moonlight, "see that you admit no one into my tent during my absence, and that you do not enter yourself, under any circumstances."

The two gentlemen walked some distance through the camp in silence. After a few minutes' progress, they came to an open area beyond the crowd of tents, when the chief, with a grave manner and in an impressive tone, said—"This romance of yours, young gentleman, if I may judge from the scene I have just beheld, is likely to be rather serious, if it has not been so already. Pardon me, but young men are easily led astray, let honour call them back ever so loudly. This lovely child—for I have seldom before seen so much beauty united with so much childlike innocence—addressed you once as brother; am I to understand that such was the relationship you assumed in your wild journey,

on which both Mars and Venus appear to have smiled ?”

“ It was, general Montgomery,” he replied, in a tone of impatience.

“ Forgive me, my dear friend, if I ask if the relationship was sacredly regarded by you ?”

“ Upon my honour, yes ! saving that love has been busy with both our hearts, she is and has been only my sister.”

His reply was delivered in a firm and frank voice, and with such natural warmth of feeling and honest sincerity, that his companion’s suspicions were at once removed.

“ ’Tis a great escape ; I did not think your youth proof against such odds as you have so happily encountered : well, if there be true love here, true love was never marred by an Irishman. After the wars, my brave youth, we will take our laurels to my farm at Rhinebeck, I to share them with my lady love, maugre that Hymen hath bound us some half-dozen years or so, and you to cast them at the feet of the lovely Eugenie ; so now let us for awhile dismiss the ladies, and take a sterner theme.

'Twas the ancient Goths, was it not, who forbade their young men to marry until they were twenty-one, or had signalized themselves in battle; but we will be neither Goths or Vandals with you. You lack at the very least two years of that hymenial age; yet fight by my side in the next battle, which will win or lose for us this fair province, and then all the graces aid you in your suit at love's court!"

The two officers, after going the rounds of the silent and well-guarded camp, within which a thousand men were buried in as deep sleep as if their heads lay beneath their own roofs, returned to the tent they had left.

"I hear the breathing of our lovely guest within, soft as that of an infant," said the general. "It is thus innocence only sleeps. Morning approaches, my young cavalier, and you may keep watch and ward, as becomes a new-made knight, beside this temple; but enter it not, on thy knightly honour; or if, as I am inclined to think, sleep be more welcome to a traveller than watching a maiden's pillow, you will find within this adjoining tent furs to form

a couch. I will lie down in Horton's quarters, for in two hours we must be on our march."

He threw himself upon the floor of the privates' tent, beside half-a-dozen soldiers heavily sleeping, with their muskets stacked in the centre, and was soon asleep. The lover, protecting his person from the snow by an ample fur robe which the general had thrown to him, also laid down, but not to sleep. By one of those accidents which strangely favours lovers, his buffalo's hide had been placed just without the canvass curtain forming the tent, and so near it, that as he placed his head close to the envious division, he could distinctly hear the gentle inspirations of the sleeper within. Reclining on his arm, with his face turned towards the tent, he lay wrapped in a dreamy enchantment, his ear receiving the soft modulations of her breathing, till at length sleep stole upon his senses. He did not awake until roused by the sudden roll of drums and the piercing cry of fifes, as the drummers beat the cheerful reveille to stir the soldiers from their short repose, preparatory to resuming with the coming dawn their rapid march.

CHAP. XIV.

The Parting.

THE first emotion of the young officer, on springing to his feet and beholding the warlike stir around him, was such as naturally would have arisen in the breast of an ambitious and daring young man, on finding himself, after so long subduing his native ardour of spirit beneath the assumed gravity of a monk, in the midst of a camp, himself a soldier. He involuntarily carried his hand to his sword-hilt, as these stirring sounds of war struck his ears, and his eyes sparkled with pride and pleasure. With these feelings were mingled, however, emotions of sadness, as he thought of his separation from Eugenie. His brow grew melancholy at the reflection, and his whole manner became at once depressed.

“How now, my young sir?” said the general, advancing and taking his hand; “you look as if you were sighing for your monk’s garb again. Your outward man showed the priest last night, while your look was martial enough; and now your face would canonize you. Well, ’tis sad, this parting of lovers, no doubt, and the briefer the better for both methinks. But if you choose to prolong the melancholy bliss, why, I suppose I must give you command of the escort for an hour’s march. You will then resign to Horsford. I cannot well spare for a longer time one who will be my most efficient aid-de-camp. Old Horsford, my stout serjeant, who, like John Rogers, has a wife and nine small children, which are somewhere about Tappan Zee, will be a safe and trusty escort till my good lady relieves him of his charge. You may rest secure, and not fear a rival in him: he thinks more of his old dame—about whom, if you give ear, and, faith! if you don’t give ear, he will wind you long stories—than of the prettiest lass for whom youthful knight ever put lance in rest. But we

must mount; I see the columns are marching out of camp."

"How large a detachment have you given this immaculate serjeant, general?"

"Twelve men; and Horsford is worth five more; as many as I can spare on this duty, but enough to awe any parties of the country-people they may fall in with. Here now comes the champion of your lady-love, booted and spurred. Well, serjeant Horsford," he continued, addressing a stout-built, hale, and hearty-looking old man of some sixty winters, which had freely frosted his bushy hair, and with a good-natured, bluff physiognomy, lighted by a twinkling blue eye, "are your men ready?"

"All ready, general," replied the serjeant, paying the military salute; "every man stands with his hand on the bridle, prepared to mount at the word."

"They shall not wait long for it. Eugenie, my daughter," he said, approaching the door of his tent, "have you yet unsealed those bright eyes, that have done so much mischief, and are

likely to do more? Horsford, man," he added, with natural humour, speaking aside to the stout serjeant, "you will need a treble breastplate, and the vision of your wife and children multiplied before those round eyes of yours full thirtyfold at least, to keep your heart true to your dame, when once you put eyes on your charge."

The old sergeant shrugged his shoulders, winked, and twisted his mouth to one side by way of reply. At the same moment the curtain of the tent was drawn aside, and the lovely guest of general Montgomery was preparing to step forth, when, meeting the stare of old Horsford, and seeing the general and her lover, she dropped the screen and shrunk back into the tent. The latter, however, sprung forward and arrested her hand as she was releasing her hold on the curtain, and said, earnestly, yet with all a lover's tenderness—"Nay, dearest Eugenie, there are none you need shrink from, unless," he added, in a low voice, which alone met her ear, "you would fly from me." As he spoke, he raised the canvass and sought her eyes by

the faint light of the dawn. They expressed mingled affection and reproof. Casting back a glance, half apologetic, half pleading, towards his superior officer, he dropped the curtain of the tent and was alone with Eugenie. Folding her in his arms, he pressed her to his heart in a lingering embrace. They both felt they were taking a long, perhaps a last farewell of each other. Neither spoke, except with their eyes, which were full of the strong language of the heart; his, burning with the dark fire of his ardent feelings; hers, soft, lambent, and full of tenderness.

It would seem that lovers can see in one another's eyes what is not so visible to the organs of ordinary mortals, and that glances interchanged are of more efficacy than words; such at least would be the inference drawn from the parting interview of Edward and Eugenie. At an hour when it would be very naturally supposed that they must have had a great deal to say, they stood gazing into each other's eyes, instead of making good use of their time by making good use of their tongues.

For several moments they lingered in this lover-like oblivion, their looks, as the romancers say, speaking volumes, when their interview was interrupted by the sudden roll of a dozen drums, the shrill music of a score of fifes, the loud blast of a bugle close without the tent, and the voice of general Montgomery giving several military orders. The next moment he lifted the curtain and entered the tent. —“ Come, my Petrarch and Laura, we are all in motion ; your canvass bower, fair Eugenie, must share the fate of war, and be stowed in the baggage-waggon, though I have a mind to send it to Rhinebeck, pitch it in my little garden, and dedicate it as a temple to Dan Cupid. It shall hereafter be put to no meaner use than Beauty’s boudoir. Suppose, for the present, I entrust it to your knight for his especial benefit while in the army, and leave its future consecration to his loyalty. Now, Miss De Lisle,’ he added, affectionately taking her hand, “ I shall regard you as my own daughter, whose happiness and interest, as such, will be very dear to me. This evening you will be at the

residence of colonel Olney, where you will meet with Mrs. Montgomery, in whom you will find both a mother and friend. Here is your escort, sergeant Horsford; he is a husband and a father; I intrust you to him with confidence in his care and attention. He already has his instructions. Now, my dear child, God bless you!"

Affectionately embracing her as he spoke, the excellent and noble-hearted man took his leave, mounted his horse, which a dragoon had been holding at the door of the tent, and waving his hand to his new aid-de-camp, said—"In three hours I shall be happy to learn from your lips, that my lovely protégé is full ten miles on her way to Trois Rivières." Then courteously kissing his ungloved hand to Eugenie, he galloped off, surrounded by several officers, to join his forces, which were already filing through the forest towards the main road.

"Sergeant, we are ready to ride," said the young aid.

"Bring up that bay pony," cried Horsford, to one of his command; "here, now, my young lady, be as genteel an animal as the queen

would wish to ride—not the queen that is, but that was, being, as we don't acknowledge king nor queen, till they give us the rights we are fighting for," added the sergeant, correcting his habitual colonial phrase, to suit his new and yet awkward American politics. "To be sure it carries no side-saddle, seeing Congress don't supply the camp with such womanish gear; but there is a good bearskin strapped over a trooper's saddle, with the two ears left sticking straight up to hold on by, which may and may not answer, all depending whether you be a good horse-woman or be not. The pony too, be en-a-most as easy as a skif sailin' on the Hudson in a calm. You could carry a mug full of cyder all the way to Montreal on the crupper and not spill a drop; but if you don't like the bearskin, why I can rig a pillion behind my own saddle, and you can ride on there, as wife and my oldest gal has done to church many a Sunday."

"I think, my worthy soldier," said Eugenie, smiling at this proposition, "I shall prefer the pony. So, if you will assist me to my saddle, I will not long hinder your journey."

"That will I, for I'd like to be back to the army before they are like to have a brush with the enemy," said the rough soldier, extending his arms as if he was about to lift a child from the ground.

"No, no, good Hosmer, not so," said the young lady, laughing and retreating.

"Horsford, young miss, not Hosmer."

"Then, worthy Horsford, I should prefer the aid of this camp-stool."

"Or my arm rather, Eugenie," said Edward, who had been busily arranging, for the greater comfort and security of the rider, the rude saddle destined for Eugenie, advancing and taking her hand as he spoke. Gracefully bending, as he received a smiling permission, he received her tiny foot in his right palm. Lightly pressing her hand upon his shoulder, she was elevated to the saddle with ease, and with much less exertion than even the rough strength of Sergeant Horsford would have demanded.

"By my honour, but that was cleverly done," said the sergeant, when he beheld her seated

firmly in the saddle ; “ these youths have the advantage of gray hairs. I must larn my eldest da'ter to mount Biddy in this shorthand fashion. Now, young gentleman, or rather major,” he added, respectfully raising his hand to his cap, “ we will up and ride, if it be your pleasure.”

The young officer mounted a fiery and beautifully-formed animal, presented to him by General Montgomery, and took his station by the bridle of his fair companion. Leaving the ground so lately teeming with life, but now silent and deserted, they turned into the main road, where the detachment or escort which was to attend Eugenie was drawn up, the men sitting immoveably on their horses, as if forming a group of equestrian statues.

“ Forward! Trot!” cried the sergeant, as he rode to the head of his troop, after placing his charge in the centre. Obeying the command, with a simultaneous movement, the squadron of horse moved forward at a round trot, and soon left the place of encampment far behind.

During the ride, the lovers, as doubtless they should now be denominated, had uninterrupted

opportunities for communication, not only with their eyes, but their tongues, the afterguard or rear division of the escort, keeping, by the command of the young officer, some paces in their rear, "lest," he said, "their heavy tramp, and the clattering and ringing of their accoutrements, should alarm the spirited pony upon which the young lady was mounted, and endanger her safety;" while, by riding very slowly, he managed to keep the van some distance in advance.

The conversation of lovers is, proverbially, only interesting to the parties themselves; and as that of ours cannot challenge an exception, it will not, if detailed, contribute materially to the entertainment of the reader. We shall, therefore, leave our fair reader, if, perchance, these ephemeral pages are honoured by the glances of bright eyes or graced by the fingers of beauty, to imagine all the sweet phrases, the endearing epithets, the tender looks, the loveful eyes, now cast down and tearful, now sparkling with hope; the soft hand-pressure, the agitated bosom, the heavy sighs, and all the other concomitants that go to make up a genuine *tête-*

à-tête between a young lover and his mistress on the eve of separation. The separation of Edward and Eugenie was rendered still more painful, as it was to be for an indefinite time, as one of them was about to mingle in the dangers of the battle-field, and the other to seek a distant home among strangers.

“There is Champlain, major,” said Sergeant Horsford, reining up and falling alongside of them, and interrupting a very interesting scene; “when we arrive there we shall have marched good fifteen miles before breaking fast.”

“Fifteen miles!” repeated the officer, with surprise, looking in the direction of the hamlet, which lay close to the water’s edge, not half a mile before them; “so far already! I thought we had not come a third of the distance.”

The old man looked quizzically as he glanced at the youthful pair, but respectfully replied—“There’s been a time, major, when I’ve thought the Monday morning cock had crowed at midnight. These lasses play the devil with old Forelock’s sandglass.”

“I must, then, return, Horsford. Ride by

this lady's bridle, and leave it not during your march." Then drawing near Eugenie, he said, despondingly—"Here we must part, sweet Eugenie; when next we meet, may it be to part no more."

He took her hand as he spoke, and, as if reluctant to resign it, continued to ride by her side till the escort entered the village, when, hastily pressing it to his lips, he cried, "God bless you! God bless you!"

Turning his horse's head, he dashed his spurs into his flanks, and, followed by two dragoons as a body-guard in his progress through a hostile country, he rode rapidly back in the opposite direction; while Eugenie, hastily veiling her face to conceal her emotion, rode forward with a heavy heart, feeling alone and desolate in the world.

From the moment Eugenie met the eyes of the youthful monk in the oratory of the convent St. Therese, until they parted in the village of Champlain, love, however disguised by the thousand little artifices by which maidens try to conceal its existence, as deep, pure, and devoted

love as woman is capable of feeling, possessed her heart. The depth and purity of her attachment insensibly produced a corresponding sentiment in the breast of the young soldier, till at length an *affaire du cœur*, as he termed it, begun in the spirit of gallantry and a romantic disposition, undeniably assumed the elevated and hallowed character of love, and he yielded his heart to the spell with which he had dared to trifle. Neither had yet spoken of love, yet both felt a conviction that they loved and were beloved with an ardour of affection allied to devotion.

The young aid-de-camp dashed along the road, on his return to the army, at a rate that kept his attendants busily employed in keeping up with him with their less active horses. He flew over hill and through hollow like a lover who is hastening to meet, rather than one who has just parted from, his mistress. Some epicurean traveller, who lived in those days when four-wheeled carriages were drawn by quadrupeds, has observed and left on record, that the most delightful of all sensations is that which is experienced

when one is whirled over a turnpike-road in a mail-coach. Doubtless this worthy gentleman laboured under the infliction of the gout, rheumatism, or some one of the other ills that render cavaliers who have attained to a certain period of life peculiarly uncomfortable, and especially unfitted for equestrian exploits, otherwise he would have substituted in that age a fleet horse for that aldermanic mode of locomotion, a mail-coach; in the present day he would have rejoiced in a railroad car. Alas! that he should have been born a generation too soon to have enjoyed the quintessence of his sensation of delight!

The deep gloom weighing upon the heart of the young horseman gradually lightened, and his spirit rode with the rapid motion of the blooded animal he rode; and partaking of the full excitement and exhilaration of his situation, he soon felt a joyousness and elasticity of spirits with which the vanity of Eugenie would have been little flattered; for genuine lovers estimate the degree of each other's affection, especially during an absence, by the length of visage they

exhibit, and the depth and quantity of their sighs. There is a story told of a sentimental maiden, who preserved her tears in a crystal lachrymatory during her lover's absence over sea, and on his return from a year's voyage, displayed it, with great exultation, nearly filled. The lover, in defence, and as we are told, to prove the equal sincerity of his love, presented her with a demijohn, which, at the request of some virtuoso, he had filled from the Lake Asphaltites ; but this digression is somewhat irrelevant to our purpose ; lovers, and not the tears which measure their love, being the subject in which our pen is enlisted.

It was noon when the horseman, moving at a slower pace than the agitation of his feelings had hitherto allowed him to adopt, arrived at the summit of a ridge, over which the road passed, and in the valley beyond beheld the army he was hastening to join. The St. Lawrence was in sight on his right, its bosom relieved here and there by a merchant-ship seeking the ocean ; small vessels, in greater numbers, sailing in different directions, and numerous

batteaux plying among the fields of ice, which, borne seaward by the strong current, momentarily threatened to crush them, with their adventurous boatmen, to atoms. More than a league distant, their long black lines relieved against the snow, his eyes followed the army, as in their march they wound through the valley, diminished by the distance to mere pigmies, and rendered still more insignificant by that contrast which always affects man or his works, when surrounded by the stupendous works of God.

The young man watched them until, to his imagination, they appeared to be only a horde of insects. Curling his lip contemptuously, as this idea became more impressive, he ironically mused—"There crawl human pride and power! Long lines of insects moving, as I have seen their prototypes, to battle. To the eye, where is the distinction? To the reason, where? Which the immortal? The emmet performs its allotted duty, and each unit in yonder black mass does no more. Both alike spring from the earth and return to it. One appears no more useful than the other; its pursuits neither more

dignified nor more earnest. Both levy armies and join battle : each army slays its thousands with a great noise, and the conqueror emmet, or conqueror man, is alike cruel to his victims. It may be that the nobler being will stand forth in the next world in his destined superiority ; but here, man is as the brutes that perish. I too have a part to perform in this silly pageant of life, and must masquerade like my fellow emmets. So, forward, and let me fling myself into the vortex that awaits me." Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped down the hill, and soon arrived at the main body of the forces, and joined the staff of general Montgomery.

" Welcome, my knight-errant !" said the general, as the young officer reined up his reeking horse by his side ; " if you are as zealous in war as you have proved in love, you will yet win a name men will pronounce with pride. How left you our lovely protégé ?"

" Well, general," replied the aid-de-camp, compelling his still-spirited horse to move along at the moderate gait preserved by the well-trained charger on which the chief was mounted.

“ What grove or fountain between this and Trois Rivières has been made sacred by beholding the parting scene between Hector and Andromache this morning ?” asked the general, pointedly.

“ No other groves than the swords and plumes of half a score of dragoons ; no other fountain than a few dropping crystals.”

“ Ha ! art given to the melting mood, my Paris ?”

“ They were not the tears of Paris, but of Helen.”

“ ’Tis fortunate,” said the general, laughing, “ that the walls of Quebec do not contain your Helen, lest it should prove a second Troy. I assure you, I have no ambition to become a modern Achilles ; but a truce to this bantering, my dear Burton. Allow me, captain M’Pherson,” he added, turning to an officer near him, “ to make you acquainted with my friend and aid. major Burton.”

The two officers bowed, and shortly after, falling a little in the rear of their superior, entered into conversation.

That night the small army of invaders en-

camped a few miles above Quebec, where general Montgomery received fresh advices from the second division of such a nature that he was induced to await its arrival. The seventh day after the departure of his messenger, whose adventures we have followed, colonel Arnold arrived at Point Levi, opposite Quebec. Disappointed by the activity of sir Guy Carleton and colonel M'Lean, in surprising the place, he crossed the St. Lawrence, after a perilous passage, and joined general Montgomery at his encampment at Aux Trembles, twenty miles above Quebec. From this point the combined forces, now constituting a formidable army, directly marched to lay siege to that important citadel, the possession of which was the key to both Canadas.

END OF VOL. I.

*2nd
R.H.*

Printed by Darling & Son, Leadenhall Street, London.



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